


HAWICK'S  
ANNUAL  
FESTIVAL  
and other  
VERSES.

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J. C.  
Goodfellow



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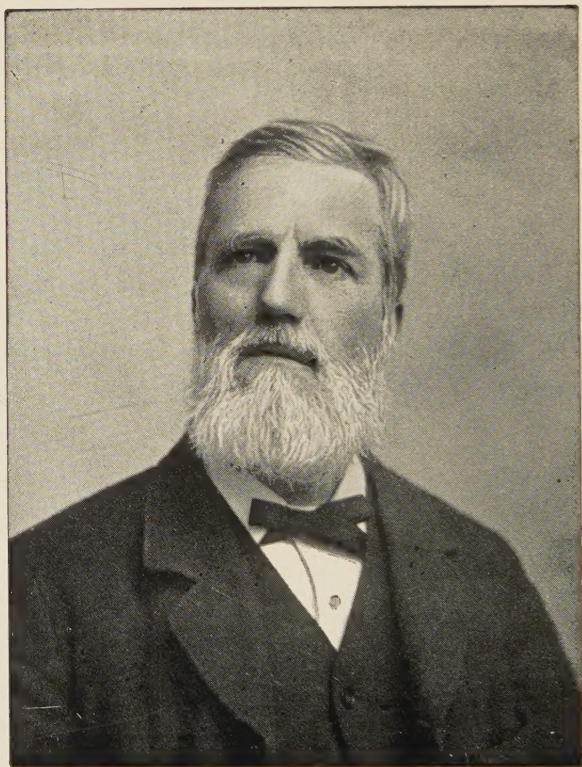


HAWICK'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL  
AND OTHER VERSES

*500 Copies printed.*







HAWICK'S  
ANNUAL FESTIVAL  
AND OTHER VERSES

BY  
J. CUMMING GOODFELLOW

HAWICK  
J. C. GOODFELLOW & SON  
63 HIGH STREET

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1911



TO  
JOHN R. HAMILTON, M.D.,  
ELM HOUSE, HAWICK,

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY  
DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR,  
AS A TOKEN OF HIS PERSONAL  
ESTEEM.





## PREFACE.

EIGHTEEN years ago, under the title of "Occasional Poems and Verses," I published a selection of poems from the pieces which I had before then written. I now venture to again place before the public a number of poems, many of which I have from time to time contributed to newspapers. The verses entitled "Hawick's Annual Festival," which give the book its name, were written in 1892. At that time I intended to give in versified form a review of the races and games held annually at the Common-Riding. The carrying out of this intention I have had to relinquish, owing to various circumstances, such as want of time and business engagements, and occasional spells of ill-health. In regard to the mode in which the book appears, I have adopted what I think is a somewhat better way of giving explanatory notes. Thus, instead of giving them at the end of the book, as has been the usual custom, I have prefixed such before the verses to which they have reference. A friend lately told me, when I asked him why he had bought a book of poems, that he had bought it for the notes, which he said were valuable and worth more than the verses. I shall be pleased if any of those who may buy this book may be of a similar opinion with regard

to the prefatory notes. The work of writing them involved a considerable amount of work, which was, however, in every case, a labour of love.

I here take the opportunity to say a few words on the writing of verses, or poetry, as verses are very frequently called. In a paper which I read at a meeting of the Hawick Burns Club, in August, 1862, I said that "the poetic is the dominant element in life. It is through the influence of the poetic spirit existing in human nature that sculpture, painting, and music have been loved, studied, and appreciated. Poetry is the uttered embodiment of human feeling and of human passion, in all its truthfulness and in all its intensity. Poetry is our expressed conceptions of the good, the truthful, and the beautiful." What I said then, I say yet, for although I am nearly fifty years older, my appreciation of the poetic element, and all that it connotes, is, I believe, relatively stronger now than it was then. I advisedly say relatively stronger, for I feel that the experience I have had, and the knowledge I have gained, through the years I have lived, enables me to more easily and readily distinguish that which is true from that which is false, not merely in relation to the spirit of poetry, but also in relation to the more æsthetic sentiment that underlies our appreciation of the true and the beautiful. To the question—What is poetry, who can give a clear, concise, and comprehensive answer? In that beautiful essay—"A Defence of Poetry"—Shelley has given definitions of poetry which claim for it a power and a charm almost illimitable, constituting, in fact, the very

acmé of earthly perfection. "Poetry," he says, "is indeed something divine. It is the centre and the circumference of knowledge. It comprehends all science. It is the record of the best and happiest moments of the best and happiest minds." The influence which the poetic element has had in the guiding of men and nations is well illustrated in the enthusiasm which songs, such as "The Marseillaise," have evoked. It has been said that to that song France owes all her modern progressive legislation. Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun said—"Give me the making of a people's songs, and I care not who makes their laws." Prose compositions may excite the rapture of the student, the orator may rouse the enthusiasm of the multitude, but the songs of a nation, whether sentimental or patriotic, thrill the heart of humanity in all ages and in all countries, here, there, and everywhere.

While it must be conceded, however, that in numerous cases the eloquence of certain passages in the works of prose writers is akin to, if not almost equal to, poetical expression, it must at the same time be admitted that the charm which rhythm and rhyme give to verse enhances, by the subtle collocation of melodious sounds, the power to arrest the attention and please the intellect. I here point to De Quincey's "Our Ladies of Death," and Bancroft's "Apostrophe to the English Language," as examples illustrative of my contention. The glowing prose paragraphs, which are to be met with in the works of such divergent writers as Lord Lytton and Joseph Mazzini, still farther emphasise what I have said on this point, and entitles the

claim that Shelley makes, that quite a number of our prose writers have been inspired by the spirit of poetry, to be seriously taken into consideration, if not given formal recognition.

It may, perhaps, be thought by some who read this preface that my remarks on the influence of the poetic spirit are a little out of place. I do not wish to give a higher rank to the poetical element than it merits. In his Ode on St Cecilia's Day, Dryden has shown, in a spirited manner and with rare ability, what varied moods are engendered in the soul of the hearer, and that, when conjoined with music, poetry in its lyrical form can

“Swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.”

I finish this preface with a last word as to the subjects of my verses. With the exception of the poems which have a relativeness to this town and district, I may claim that the themes of my poems have not before now been treated in verse. It may also seem to the reader that there is a crudeness in the modes of expression, and that there is a want of finish; that, in fact, there is a note of immaturity running throughout the treatment of the various subjects—if so, this must be ascribed to the insufficiency of my knowledge or to my paucity of expression.

JUNE, 1911.

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Those that have Notes prefixed are marked with an Asterisk (\*).

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# HAWICK'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL

## AND OTHER VERSES.



### HAWICK'S ANNUAL FESTIVAL.

The Common-Riding is not a festival the celebration of which is of recent inception. Craig and Laing in their work on "The Hawick Tradition of 1514" have gone into the subject very exhaustively, and have shown conclusively that the Common-Riding was celebrated, and had an existence long before the year 1514. The MS. records of the town of Hawick, that are preserved in the town's muniment chest, date from the year 1638. That Hawick was a Burgh having certain rights and privileges many years antecedent to 1537, the date of the Douglas Charter, is not now in any way a matter of doubt. It is plainly and clearly stated in the preliminary sentences of the Douglas Charter, that Hawick "stood from of old created a free Burgh of Barony." The Douglas Charter only reiterates with special particularity all the reasons which influenced James Douglas, Baron Drumlanrig, to renew and confirm what had of old been before that time in existence. The town's records prior to 1638 have, like many other MS. documents, been lost, stolen or destroyed, during the turbulence of the preceding centuries. That the ceremony of the Common-Riding had an historical existence long before the date of the earliest MS. in the town's archives the subsequent references to it show very clearly. These references are all of a kind that indicate how very much the spirit of upholding the ancient ceremonialism that pertained to the riding of the boundaries of the common lands had been ingrained in the minds of the people. Before the alteration of the style, the festival was held on the last Friday and

Saturday of May. The deletion of eleven days in 1752 from the calendar of that year, whereby the 3rd day of September was reckoned as the 14th September, made the Common-Riding of 1753 fall in June. Since then it has been held on the Fridays and Saturdays that fall between the fifth day and the twelfth day of June. For a full and fairly accurate account of the proceedings as now observed, from the Thursday afternoon until the Saturday afternoon, see the Common-Riding Song Book published yearly.

'Tis Summer, and the golden sun on high  
Shines bright with fervid rays upon the town :  
The joyous lark is fluttering in the sky  
O'erhead, not far from where its bed of down  
Low-lying is concealed from school-boy's quest.  
Who oft-times, ruthless or devoid of thought,  
With cruel fingers robs the little nest,  
Nor thinks one moment of the havoc wrought.

The streets are busy with a jocund throng—  
Men, women, children, old and young are there.  
And on each lip the murmur of a song,  
Whose echoes seem to fill the Summer air,  
Is breathed with exultation, deep and proud.  
Their bosoms swell with ardour and delight,  
They feel as if with valour re-endowed  
And ready 'gainst their country's foes to fight.

He who has felt the ardour for the fray,  
And longed for foeman worthy of his steel,  
Can best with vigour in his mind pourtray  
The surging thoughts that make the callous feel :  
He who is thus alive to valour's call,  
Whose soul ne'er felt a coward's fear of death,  
Will fall himself or make his foeman fall,  
And bless his country with his dying breath.

From many a house gay flags and pennons fly,  
And Scotia's ancient emblem in the breeze,  
From the Town Hall displayed, attracts each eye  
And charms e'en some whom it were ill to please.  
Anon the drums and fifes send forth their strains  
Of martial music, rousing old and young,  
And many a glance from friend to friend reveals  
The pleasant thoughts unspoken by the tongue.

But now the shades of night begin to fall  
And to their homes the citizens repair,  
And oft with glowing words past times recall  
When they the cheering joys of old could share ;  
And hopes are high that the incoming day  
Shall be propitious, and the weather born  
Be such as everyone could wish alway  
To follow on "the night afore the morn."

There is a gladness born within the breast  
When we surmount what we had thought would prove  
A stubborn menace, threatening to arrest  
Our progress on the way in which we move ;  
Our spirit then enjoys that glad rebound  
From dark despair, when 'neath hope's flattering ray  
With pleasing force a clearer path is found  
By which we travel on from day to day.

There is a gladness floods the hungry soul  
That thirsts for want of intellectual food,  
When means are found by which the wished for goal  
Is full in view—when amplest store of good  
And grandest thoughts of sages and of seers  
Is placed within our grasp, we then enjoy  
A feast of reason which nor prince nor peers  
With all their power hath privilege to destroy.

Such gladness as is here in brief set forth  
Is naught compared unto the joy that thrills  
The souls of those who know full well the worth  
Of softest air and sunshine bright, and fills  
Them with a pleasure of a placid kind ;  
Then in the breast alike of rich and poor  
There rises up a sense of joy refined,  
As on they journey to St Leonard's Moor.

But in the early morn, ere yet the sun  
Hath shed his rays alike o'er hill and vale,  
When the rich east has lost its colour dun  
And is bright-tinted with a radiance pale  
And streaked with glory from the god of day,  
Who heralds his approach with golden beams,  
Then weather prophets they make haste to say  
They had all this foretold in prescient dreams.

And though the matin bells have not yet rung  
Their usual peal unto the world wide,  
Alert with joyous life both old and young  
Their steps are wending to the Tower Dykeside,  
There, quick from hand to hand the snuff mull goes :  
There, hearts are light and merry while the snuff  
That pleases all and titillates each nose  
Is keenly relished—'tis such glorious stuff.

And now the Cornet and his blithesome lads  
Unto their breakfast do themselves betake,  
And jest and laughter without measure glads  
Their youthful hearts till they in haste forsake  
The generous feast, each pleased to note the hour  
So long desired is now so near at hand,  
When they, with all the verve their youthful power  
Can show, the streets parade—a merry band,



Now the procession forms, and first we see  
The marshal on his prancing steed appear,  
And then the Saxhorn Band, with fervid glee,  
Sends forth brave notes that please the listening ear ;  
And slowly now the town's officials pass  
In various sorts of vehicles, and then  
The drums and fifes, the Cornet, and a mass  
Of horsemen, old and young, of lads and men.

The Vertish Hill is studded o'er with crowds  
Who watchful gaze with quick and eager eyes ;  
The Cornet with the standard comes in sight,  
The surging crowds greet him with joyous cries,  
The road is cleared, and now the Cornet's chase  
Attracts all eyes. Now to the Nipknowes' crest  
The eager horses with their riders fly,  
All madly striving hard to do their best.

With jocund laughter and with merry talk  
The Cornet's following their route pursue,  
Nor slack their trotting steeds until at length  
St Leonard's buildings, welcome, meet their view.  
A rich repast of curds and cream awaits  
The cavalcade, who, all with hearty glee,  
Enjoy the fare for them so kindly spread  
Beneath the awnings of a grand marquee.

And toasts are drunk and Border songs are sung,  
And wit to jovial conversation lends  
Its charm, while with a courtly air the host  
Unto the company's every want attends.  
The hostess too, with that unconscious ease  
Which aye so well her graceful form befits,  
Delights all there, and wins the warm applause  
Which hearts to hearts with loving-kindness knits.

In front of old St Leonard's now the throng

With one accord assemble, old and young  
All share the duties that to them belong—

Again the Common-Riding Song is sung,  
The grand old chorus floods the Summer air,

While lusty lungs, and voices loud and clear,  
With strong and resonant acclaim attest  
How well they all our festival can cheer.

Now to the Moor the Cornet and his men

With emulous longings eager take their way,  
Then round the Course the lads the Cornet chase,

Alert and joyous, like to boys at play.

This duty o'er, then all are free to roam

Where'er their inclinations bid them stray,  
While flying horses after horses fly,  
And race to race succeeds throughout the day.

The world hath many gorgeous pageants seen

Since Homer's time unto the present day,  
From Cleopatra, Egypt's beauteous queen,

Until the one-august, whose royal sway  
On this our era sheds such fulgent light,

That those deep learned in wisdom's sacred lore  
With one accord have deemed her reign so bright  
That grander reign was never known before.

The pageants and processions of old Rome,

With splendour vast and pomp magnificent,  
Received acclaim as shown by many a tome

From plebeians and patricians—won comment  
From writers in those distant climes and ages,

Who marked the courses of a nation's life,  
And notice took of every force that wages  
Its energising power in constant strife.

The pageantry and power of all the Stuart kings,  
Whose Scottish blood impelled to proud display,  
Ne'er drew from him,\* who of their glory sings,  
More fervid praises than our bards to-day  
With joint consent accord unto our Queen†  
Who rules with wisdom, and with power august  
Receives her subjects, and with gracious mien  
Trusts those who in her hands repose their trust.

Yet nowhere in the Borderland is there  
A pageant that so much enthralls the soul  
As this, that in the Border town of Hawick  
Doth yearly come as on each year doth roll.  
Our hearts exulting feel nought can compare  
With this display of old Hawick's Border sons ;  
And while the strains of Teribus float on the air  
Within each breast the life-blood proudly runs.

Long may it run, long may each Callant's heart  
Throb through the years until that festal time  
When celebration is to him a part  
Of immemorial custom, so sublime  
That words must ever fail to make it clear  
To those in whose veins no Havician blood  
Has ever found a course in which to run,  
While Hawick triumphs over flame and flood.

Long may it run—long may the life blood thrill  
Each Hawick man's heart with patriotic glow ;  
Long may the earnest hand and dauntless will  
Have power to strive as strove they long ago.  
Long may our Border men with pungent force  
Assert their manhood's claims, nor fear to stand  
In grand defence of rights by field and flood  
Acquired of old in this our Borderland.

\* Sir Walter Scott.

† Victoria (this was written in 1894).

## THE SPECTRE OF BRANXHOLME.

The tradition of a Spectre haunting certain of the apartments and passages in Branxholme Castle obtained credence and acceptance, more than five hundreds of years ago, from the people living in the district. Sir Walter Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel" is to some extent founded on the doings of a frightful phantom, who is termed "a goblin page" in the verses of that metrical romance. John Gibson Lockhart, Scott's son-in-law and biographer, says, respecting the idea that Scott held in this connection, "a single scene of feudal festivity in the hall of Branksome, disturbed by the pranks of a nondescript goblin, was probably all that he contemplated." In the notes to Leyden's "Lord Soulis" it is stated that the spirits which haunt old castles were usually spoken of as "Redcaps." The ruined towers in the South of Scotland were each one of them supposed to have had a Redcap, such as the one which answered the call of Lord Soulis at Hermitage Castle.

If any one should say to me

That Branxholme Hall held many a ghost

I would reply with levity

That those who thought so sure were lost ;

Lost in a depth of darksome night,

For well I wot no man can say

'That Branxholme Hall of ancient might

Hath held a ghost for many a day.

In other years, long now gone by,

When war and bloodshed marked the land,

When knights in mail-clad armour strove

Against each other, hand to hand,

I've heard it said that Branxholme Hall

Had denizens of spectral form,

Whose awful power was felt by all

In day or darkness, calm or storm.

Before the present house was built,  
More than three hundred years ago,  
Stood Branxholme Castle near the spot,  
Though not a stone remains to show  
Where then it reared its massive form,  
Defying every Border blast ;  
Its walls were thick, its gates were strong,  
As if 'twas built for aye to last.

The barons then, who there held sway  
In feudal state with powerful hold,  
Were famed throughout fair Teviotdale,  
They were, no doubt, both strong and bold ;  
And many a ruthless deed was done  
By knights that recked not of the sin,  
And tales were told by old and young  
Of conflicts fierce, of battles' din.

What shameful deed besmirched with guilt  
Attaches to the Lovels' name ?  
What untold sin ?—no mortal knows  
Except the monk who shrived the same.  
Yet, there it stands in black and white,  
That Henry Lovel, Branxholme's lord,  
Two oxen gang of land did gift,  
According to his promised word,

Unto St Andrew's holy Friars,  
When he to Father Phelp confessed,  
His bosom torn with sin and shame  
His soul with guilt and fear opprest.  
With anguish Father Philip heard  
The tale that Lovel told that day,  
Yet shrived the sinning penitent  
And bade him sin no more alway.

Yet after that the western tower  
Of Branxholme Castle, day and night,  
Was said to hold a Spectral form,  
To gaze on which appalled the sight ;  
And those who ventured near the tower  
At all times heard unearthly cries,  
Whose vain beseechings rose to heaven  
As if to offer sacrifice.

Say, was it treason to the land  
That gave him birth, that nursed his sire,  
That powerless, palsied made his hand,  
Cursed him with ruth both deep and dire ?  
For as the Teviot murmuring ran,  
And hoarse winds raved around the tower,  
The peasants prayed aloud to heaven  
To save them from the Spectre's power.

Yet ever since, it has been said,  
A Spectre roamed in Branxholme Tower,  
Though never seen by man or maid  
Except at night in darkest hour.  
The trembling cottar passing by  
With glance aslant and ashen face  
Invoked the saints to be his shield  
Until he'd passed the haunted place.

We reckon not now that spirit forms  
Can cause us weal or work us woe,  
The fancied Spectres of the past  
Affright us not, though long ago,  
Ere commonsense made us aware  
That there could be no wicked power,  
'Twas deemed that such could cast a spell  
Or haunt the halls of Branxholme Tower.



## A MORNING HYMENEAL SONG.

The poem under this title is an attempt to put into verse a prose rendering of a morning hymeneal song as given at page 97 in the sixth volume of the "Travels of Anacharsis the younger, in Greece." This work, the author of which was the Abbe Barthelemy, is one which, more than any other of which I have any knowledge, presents to the reader a view of the state or condition of Greece, as respects the manners and customs of the various provinces, especially in relation to literature and the arts, in a period, and at a time, when Greece may almost be said to have reached the zenith of her fame. The era chosen by the author comprises the time from 363 B.C. to 337 B.C., a period of twenty-six years. M. Barthelemy's plan of the work was as follows. He imagined that a Scythian, named Anacharsis, arrives in Greece some years before the birth of Alexander, makes Athens his headquarters, and from there makes excursions into the different states and provinces of Greece. He has conversations with some of the great men who then flourished, with Epaminondas, Phocion, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Demosthenes, and others. After the battle of Chæronea (6th or 7th August, 338 B.C.) he returns to Scythia, and writes an account of his experiences in Greece. J. J. Barthelemy, author of the "Travels of Anacharsis," was a man of remarkable erudition and learning. He was born on the 20th of January, 1716. He was educated in the College of the Oratory at Marseilles, and also in the seminary at Marseilles. When nearly thirty years of age he went to Paris and engaged in various literary and mediæval studies. He succeeded in obtaining several situations, which resulted finally in him being appointed Keeper of the Medals in the King's Cabinet. He was also elected a member of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions and Belle Lettres. He was denounced to the Republic and imprisoned in the Madelonettes, on the 2nd September, 1793, after having been stripped of all the offices he held and the goods he possessed. After a very short detention he was released, and on 12th October, 1793, through the kindness of M. Paré, the Minister of the Interior, had restored to him the office of Keeper of the National Library. He purposed to publish a catalogue of the Medals in the Cabinet,

and he states in his Memoirs that during an experience of fifty years he had examined more than four hundred thousand medals. He began the "Travels of Anacharsis" in the year 1757, and for thirty years never intermitted his labours to complete it. It was finished in December, 1788. The title page of vol. I. of the six volume edition of the "Travels of Anacharsis" is dated London, 1817.

IN our songs we praises sing  
O Venus unto thee,  
Of Olympus thou the ornament  
Art, ever fair and free.  
The sons of men delight in love  
And Hymen, even thou,  
Who art the noblest source of life  
To thee the people bow.

Now in our songs we celebrate  
The triad ever great,  
Of Venus, Hymen, and of Love,  
Whose altars guard our state.  
Theagenes ! awake, awake,  
Your eyes turn on your love,  
Whose virgin charms have moved your soul  
With pureness of a dove.

A favourite of Venus thou  
With youth and glory crowned,  
The worthy mate of Ismenè  
Thou happiness hast found.  
Awake ! Theagenes, awake !  
Behold your lovely spouse,  
Survey the splendour of her charms  
And render her thy vows.

The freshness that springs jubilant  
And animates her frame,

And all her charms embellishes  
Can ne'er to thee be tame.  
The rose is always queen of flowers ;  
Of women, Ismenè  
Shall always be the lovely queen  
And sacred unto thee.

Already see her trembling eyes  
Ope to the golden rays,  
Which Phœbus rising from his bed  
Sheds o'er the earth always.  
O! happy thou, Theagenes,  
To thee blest mornings break,  
Thrice happy now thou art, O spouse  
Of Ismenè, awake.

JUNE 16, 1894.

---

## A DREAM.

I WANDERED in a distant land,  
'Mid hills and lakes serene and mild ;  
At first they doubtless seemed to be  
The scenes I knew when quite a child ;  
The hills whose peaks were reared aloft,  
To heaven towering pierced the sky,  
While mirrored in the quiet lakes  
Their peaks down pointing seemed to lie.

The day was dull, for quietness  
Seemed as with guazy film outspread,  
While rest and peace filled everywhere  
And noise and turmoil were quite dead ;

And as the hazy sun declined  
And lengthening shadows told that night  
Was fast approaching, in my soul  
There rose a sense of calm respite.

The quiet day, the silent eve,  
The sombre hills that lay around,  
Awoke in me a subtle joy  
And made me feel 'twas sacred ground.  
The placid waters of the lakes  
Stirred by no breeze no motion made :  
The calmness of the Summer time  
Was over all in sun or shade.

I felt the lethic influence  
Creep spell-like o'er my easy life,  
My senses lulling into rest,  
Devoid of care, or wish for strife.  
How different from that other time,  
When fresh from school, an eager lad,  
For something difficult to do  
I longed, to show the power I had.

Bright days that shed their gladdest hours  
Where'er my youthful footsteps went ;  
Bright days passed 'mid fair Carlee's bowers  
Unmixed with care or discontent ;  
Bright halcyon days, I think of them  
As islets 'mid the by-past time,  
On which the sun serenely shone  
From azure skies with light sublime.

My dream is o'er—I wake and find  
The dark night gone, the morning grey ;

With radiant beams that glad and cheer,  
The sun uprising floods the day.  
My visions all are cast aside,  
They claim no more a moment's thought,  
The fancies that are born of sleep  
Our waking hours resolve to nought.

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## A SONG OF THE SEA.

I WILL sing you a song—a song of the sea ;  
My song is a sad one, for sad am I ;  
I have suffered much since my sailor lad  
Left me alone when he said good-bye.

Oh calm is the sea in the Summer days,  
When the wind is at rest and the waves asleep ;  
But rude is the storm when the fierce gale blows  
And founders the ships that sail on the deep.

My love went to sea when the Summer sun  
Was high in the heavens and the air was clear,  
And the stately ship, with her sails all set,  
Sailed away from the port of Combermere.

She sailed away, but she never returned,  
No news ever came, no tale ever told  
The fate of the ship that sailed to the west  
With her valiant crew of sailors bold.

We waited, and waited, and waited in vain,  
And for many long days we had hopes and fears,  
But our souls are sad, and our hopes are dead,  
And the pain in our hearts fills our eyes with tears.

Oh ! the years have come, and the years have gone,  
Since that day when my sailor lad went to sea,  
But the sorrow I feel, I can never reveal,  
For the loss of that ship lost my love to me.

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## OUR EMPIRE.

Several years ago, when Mr Chamberlain delivered a speech in Glasgow, the main point in which was the idea of reciprocity in trade with our Colonies, the following verses were written. They epitomise to a considerable extent the views expressed then by Mr Chamberlain.

SHE is the mother of many lands beyond the ocean's  
foam,  
Whose peoples look to her always as to their rightful  
home ;  
Britannia rules the waves ; she is proud, erect, and free ;  
August in strength, supreme in power, the mistress of  
the sea.

Our Empire slowly has emerged out of the hazy past,  
Though great and glorious now, how long shall its great-  
ness last,  
If we, the men of the present time, refuse to tender our  
aid  
And help to maintain the Empire in the progress it  
has made ?

\* \* \*

"The day of empires has come," small nations can prevail  
no longer,  
We must sail in the rush of the stream if we are to be  
greater or stronger ;

The past with its glories must ever incite us to noble  
emprise,

We must lead in the van of the nations, in the road that  
before us now lies.

Let the North and South shake hands, let the East and  
West agree

To let party rivalries cease, to make action unitedly be  
In the course of the pathway of nations, impulsive, pro-  
gressive alway ;

And Britain, majestic and strong, shall aye be the  
freeman's stay.

Refuse, and the doom shall be ours that erstwhile fell  
upon Rome ;

And we, fallen, dejected and spurned, the scorn of the  
nations become.

Refuse, and the past with its glories shall seem like a  
dream of the night,

While the future shall pall on our vision and cease our  
regard to invite.

Accept, and a destiny grander than any the earth has yet  
seen

Shall be ours, beneath the forces of nature, immanent,  
august, and serene,

Accept, and our Empire's glories shall be bright, and  
ennoble the sway

Of Britain, with her children, the Colonies, for ever, and  
ever, and aye.

## CECIL JOHN RHODES.

Few men have done more than Mr Rhodes did to advance civilisation under British influence. His life reads like a romance. Its salient points appeal forcibly to our progressive instincts and have much in common with our populating tendencies. His father, who for over twenty years was rector of Bishop Storthford, Hertfordshire, had a family of six boys. Cecil was the least likely of them whom any person would have expected to become famous. When he was fifteen years of age, he was a delicate and rather dull looking lad. He had been privately educated and he was in very bad health. The doctor who attended him had pronounced doom on him—"afflicted with tuberculosis, recovery impossible." Such was the verdict. As a last bid for recovery it was resolved to try how far a residence in South Africa would benefit him. This was in 1867, in which year he landed in Cape Colony. The African climate, in little more than a year's time, had an almost magical influence on him, and he soon began to take a strong and healthy interest in life. He started as a cotton planter in Natal, but about 1872 gave up the growing of cotton to embark in the diamond industry. At Kimberley he invested several thousands of pounds in old De Beers shares, and claims, and lands. When the mining industry fell on evil days Rhodes saw that there was a possibility of forming the scattered mining interests into one, and he worked unweariedly until he succeeded in forming the De Beers Diamond Mining Company, and thereby made himself a millionaire. After this he went to Oriel College, Oxford, and for five years lived a life partly as a student at Oxford and partly as a manager of the diamond mines at Kimberley. Rhodes was always very much interested in the politics of South Africa. In 1880, he was Chancellor in the Cape Scanlen Ministry. In 1884-85, he laboured for peace when Mr Mackenzie the British resident in British Bechuanaland was compelled to resign by the Dutch party. He became Premier of Cape Colony in 1890. He was the chief mover in obtaining mining rights in Mashonaland and in Matabeleland, and he was Chairman of the British South African Company till 1896. His aim was to unite all the divisions of South Africa in matters of tariff, railways, law and coinage, but with local



governments. Rhodesia is named after him. He died in 1902, and on 3rd April, 1902, the formal pomp of his obsequies took place. The highest of the Matoppian range of mountains has been called the World's View, and it is in a hewn out cavity, almost at the summit, that the coffin enclosing his body has been laid in majestic rest.

SILENT he lies—a man of virile fame—  
Where the World's View doth rear its mighty head,  
'Mid giant hills, o'er the Rhodesian plains.  
Silent he lies—a hero of renown,  
No more alert—he is forever dead.

The fertile brain, that Oriel's halls sent forth,  
Is now at rest—and never, never more  
Can nobly plan an Empire's wider realm—  
In grand repose, amid Matoppian heights,  
He rests for aye—never to wake again.

“So little done, so much to do,” alas!  
These his last words bespeak the thoughts that moved  
His troubled mind. For him the Stygian shore,  
Or Lethean stream, held no superfluous place,  
His latest thought for human progress cried.

Life's fitful fever o'er—he sleeps at last—  
His prescient eye with innate force foresaw  
The need to compass for the Saxon race  
The mighty schemes that fired his ardent soul,  
And so he worked with earnest heart and will  
For Britain's Empire and his country's good.

Then rear aloft a fit memorial,  
In grateful homage to his memory,  
That generations yet to come may know  
That there was one who with his latest breath  
Loved Britain, and with all his matchless might  
Gave reverence due to her majestic name.

APRIL, 1902.

## A STREET SINGER'S SONG.

One day, a number of years ago, a woman was singing in the main street of our town. She was fairly well dressed, and seemed to belong, or to have belonged, to a class superior to that of the ordinary working population. She was of tallish stature, and had a very fine and powerful voice. The songs she sang were all of a plaintive or mournful kind. A saddening influence seemed to be cast over those who listened to the thrilling and almost despairing tone which the singer's voice gave to the music. I myself was very much struck with the piercing and pathetic rendering, especially of the last song she sung. I failed to catch the words of the song, but the following verses which I wrote shortly afterwards seem to me to express the main sentiments to which the music ought to have been wedded.

It was night and the ocean was silent and sleeping,  
No foam on its billows, no cold drenching spray,  
And I knew that my darling his lone vigil keeping  
Would think of his home and his loved ones away.  
Oh, say does the future still hold in its keeping  
A time when my soul shall from sorrow be free ?  
I have cried for my darling while the west wind was  
wailing,  
But he'll never, no never, return back to me.

The Summer may come with its flowers and its glory  
And fill us with rapture like music's soft strain :  
And the land may be glad with love's often told story,  
While the earth blooms with beauty and verdure again.  
But all brightness and gladness are gone from my being,  
For the one that I loved is now far, far from me ;  
And the hopes once enkindled in me now have perished,  
For the love that was mine, now no more mine can be,

I have felt all the rapture that love can engender,  
I have tasted the sweets of its passionate glow,  
And my soul is yet thrilled when I chance to remember  
The bliss that was mine in the years long ago.  
Though my hopes are now dead and life's glory departed,  
The days that are past are yet days that shall be  
Remembered while life throbs with fervent pulsation,  
And I dream of the time when my loved one loved me.  
Oh the bliss ! Oh the rapture, the glory of loving,  
While memory wakes, cannot fade from my mind ;  
While the pain and the sorrow that has been my portion  
With the transports that deaden the smart is combined.  
For love is a passion that burns with a madness  
That time may restrain but can never destroy ;  
It controls with a force that is quite superhuman  
And blesses or blights with its feverish joy.

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## THE PESSIMIST'S RECITAL.

WHEN I was young I dreamed that I  
Would some day wander far away  
In untrod regions of the earth,  
Where nature held supremest sway ;  
But years have come and years have gone,  
And here am I, an aged man,  
Whose youthful dreams are unfulfilled.  
Alas ! of life I've reached the span,  
I face my fate as best I can.  
The friends I had in youth are dead,  
All dead, they rest beneath the ground ;  
Some of them wandered far afield,  
Some of them roamed the world round.

What have I done? Alas! Ah me,  
I've lived a life, uncultured, sad,  
Unblest, uncared for, year by year.  
I've lived in vain, I am not mad,  
I'm near the end, and I am glad.

The crowds that pace the city's street  
Have passed me by at morn and night,  
Yet none have guessed how often I  
In living, have had no delight.  
The splendour of the southern climes,  
That once I hoped would glad mine eyes,  
Can never now irradiate  
The dark fate that before me lies  
With bright and glorious surprise.

The weary round of daily work  
Day after day has been my lot,  
And as I've worked and toiled away  
I have at times my dreams forgot;  
But when at eve my toil is o'er  
Again my roaming thoughts will stray,  
And fancies rich and rare will rise  
And cheer me on with fitful ray  
Until the passing of the day.

Thus on and on, day after day,  
With ceaseless round my life must go;  
The hopes that once I had are gone,  
And now, effete, I bow me low.  
I bend before the fate that flows  
With austere touch from many hands,  
I gladly hail the rest that comes,  
Which the worn, wearied frame demands  
When run out are life's golden sands.

## TO THE YEAR THAT IS GONE.

I WELCOMED thee, even as I would a friend,  
Who came with outstretched hand and voice of amity ;  
I loved to think that in thy time to reign  
A message might be born o'er land and sea,  
That peace on earth, goodwill to man should be.

Now thou at length from us are wholly gone,  
The days and months so full of golden hopes,  
So bright with promises all unfulfilled,  
Are added to the lonesome past. Vain are regrets  
O'er blasted hopes and thoughts of happier times.

There is no need for shedding useless tears,  
Though in the shadowy past thy form is dimly seen ;  
Another year has come, whose gladdening aspect wears  
The rosy blush of opening morn, and bright  
With joyous greetings calms our present fears.

Now to the storehouse of past memories  
We relegate thy doings, there repositing  
All thoughts of thee. When history's page recalls  
Unto our minds thy veriform and awful deeds,  
We shall the tome throw past with shuddering eyes.

JANUARY 1, 1905.

## HECTOR ARCHIBALD MACDONALD.

Hector Archibald Macdonald was born on 4th March, 1853, at Rootfield, in the parish of Urquhart, Ross-shire. In June, 1870, he enlisted in the 92nd Regiment, afterwards called the Gordon Highlanders. He was Colour-Sergeant in the Afghan War in 1879-80. He marched from Kabul to Kandahar, and was promoted 2nd Lieutenant. He was in the Boer War, 1881; taken prisoner at Majuba Hill; in the Nile Expedition, 1885; at the battle of Assiout, at Suakim in 1888—got medal and clasp; at Suakim, 1889, made Companion of the Distinguished Service Order; at the capture of Tokar, 1891; commanded Infantry Brigade in the Dongala Expedition (Lieutenant-Colonel); got Khedive's medal and two clasps, also British medal; in 1897-98 at battles of Atbara, Khartoum, Omdurman; was thanked by Parliament; made A.D.C. to the Queen; promoted to be Colonel; Brigadier-General commanding troops in Sirhind district in India, 1899-1900; Major Royal Fusiliers; Major-General commanding Highland Brigade in South Africa, 1900; at battle of Paardeberg was wounded, 16th February, 1900; entered Bloemfontein with Lord Roberts; welcomed home with great acclaim; great reception in London; presented with sword of honour at Glasgow; feted at Dingwall; honoured at Mulbuie; nine times mentioned in despatches before 1900. Under some imputations on his character, made, it has been said, owing to jealousy, his mind gave way when he was in Paris on his way home in March, 1903, and he committed suicide by shooting himself. There were universal expressions of regret and commiseration at this unfortunate and regrettable termination to a brilliant and unique career. His body was brought home to Scotland, and was laid to rest in the Dean Cemetery, Edinburgh.

LET our banners trail low in the pathway,  
Let our swords in their sheaths rest awhile,  
Till we lay on the grave of our hero  
A wreath from his heathery isle.

For "Fraoch Eilean" is our slogan,  
Shouted oft by our chief in the field,  
When he led us to death, or to glory,  
For Macdonalds they never can yield.

Oh! the pity of all this sad sorrow,  
It bows us heart-crushed to the ground,  
Our tears — tears of blood are that blind us —  
Where can solace or comfort be found !  
Our hero, the pride of the Highlands,  
Our leader in many a fray,  
Will never more lead us to battle,  
He now lies beneath the cold clay.

He is gone, yet his spirit for ever  
Shall live in the heart of his clan,  
And shall nerve us to dauntless endeavour,  
Claymore to claymore, man to man.  
While the red and white heather shall flourish,  
And on mountain sides proudly shall wave,  
We, the fame of our hero shall nourish,  
Of Hector Macdonald, the brave.

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## HAWICK : OUR HERITAGE.

I'VE often felt when sunny skies o'erhead  
Looked down o'er Teviot's fair romantic vale,  
When full of beauty were the Summer days,  
That gladness, purity and innocence  
Were fitting themes to win a poet's praise.

Romance o'er all has cast her wondrous spell,  
The softened outline of the rounded hills  
Is ever present in the Borderland,

While peaceful vales, that seem to stretch away  
In unknown distance, here are close at hand.

Here Hardie's Hills in rugged beauty rise,  
With knowes and hollows interspersed between,  
Where roam the timid sheep, nor heed the roar  
Of frequent trains, that through the rocky gorge  
Day after day rush past for evermore.

Beyond the vale in which the town hath place,  
The sunny hills, with clustering villas clad,  
Look fair and charming to the gazing eye,  
While Wilton's broad domain, that shuts the view  
With pleasant blending, skirts the western sky.

This is our heritage. Of old it was  
A home of heroes, men of high renown,  
Who bravely stemmed on many a bloody field  
The southern tide of war, who courted death,  
Though love of life would fain have made them yield.

MARCH 19, 1906.

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## QUATRAINS.

Is life worth living? I one day did ask  
A friend who, labouring at his daily task  
Of making shoes, looked up with wondering face  
And straight replied, "Life's nought but a bal-masque."

There is no standard by which we can weigh  
The thoughts and deeds of men as day by day  
Each one pursues the lure that leads him on  
In peaceful paths or in the battle's fray.



To follow fashion is a woman's forte,  
To follow women is to some men sport ;  
Some fools are knavish, and some knaves are fools,  
Nature decrees that men should women court.

Much marvelled I that any one should think  
That Clubs were only there that men might drink.  
There are, said I, low " Pubs " as well as Clubs,  
From touch with which all decent men will shrink.

When men resolve to do a scurvy trick  
They hide beneath a mask—for any stick  
Is good enough to beat a neighbour's dog,  
Nor does their action e'er their conscience prick.

" I challenge now the man who said that I  
Was a Pro-Boer," so spake a bumming fly.  
The time sped on, and days and nights were gone,  
And yet the challenge gained not a reply.

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## SOCRATES.

Than Socrates, no one of all the Athenian philosophers more deserves to be revered by humanity. " The singular merit of Socrates," says William Mitford in his " History of Greece," " lay in the purity and the usefulness of his manners and conversation ; the clearness with which he saw, and the steadiness with which he practised in a blind and corrupt age, all moral duties ; the disinterestedness and the zeal with which he devoted himself to the benefit of others ; and the enlarged and warm benevolence, whence his supreme and almost only pleasure seems to have consisted in doing good." There are no more saddening pages in Grecian history than those which narrate the trial, condemnation and death of Socrates. He was accused " of reviling the gods whom the city (Athens) acknowledges, and of preaching other new gods, moreover, he is guilty of corrupting the youth." Besides these points in the

sworn indictment, which was preferred against him, it was also urged "that he was disaffected to the democracy." In court he declared he was innocent of the charges made against him, and he said that even if all the charges against him had been proved, they did not collectively amount to a capital crime. "You well know," he said, "Athenians, that had I engaged in public business, I should long ago have perished without procuring any advantage either to you or to myself. Let not the truth offend you: it is no peculiarity of your democracy or of your national character: but wherever the people is sovereign, no man who shall dare honestly to oppose injustice—frequent and extravagant injustice—can avoid destruction." Socrates was condemned to die, and he accepted with equanimity the verdict of the court. The Athenian mode of execution, namely, compelling the condemned person to drink a cup of hemlock juice, had no terrors for him, but rather the opposite. He was then in his seventieth year, and he felt that he could welcome death, as it would afford him a means to escape the evils and woes incidental to old age and the decay of the human system. During the time between his condemnation and the date of his death means were taken by his friends in order that he might escape, but he resolutely refused to take advantage of them. He had always, he said, taught the duty of obedience to the laws, and he would not furnish an example of the breach of that duty. So, surrounded by his friends at the appointed hour, he drained the cup of hemlock wine and died. In the history of Greece, but more especially in the history of her Republics before the time of Socrates, the human mind had a very dull perception of a just moral sense. That he in his teaching reached a higher ethical standard than that accepted before his time is now the consented opinion of nearly all modern writers. "It is," says William Mitford, "through the light which Socrates diffused by his doctrine, enforced by his practice, with the advantage of having both the doctrine and the practice exhibited to highest advantage in the incomparable writings of disciples such as Xenophon and Plato, that his life forms an era in the history of Athens and of man."

SOCRATES ! in thy perfect life,  
Devoid of hatred, storm or strife,  
Illumed by graces born of love  
For human progress, such as move

The patriot's soul, we now behold  
Majestic virtues which of old  
Gave courage to the brave and bold ;  
Gained high encomiums from all those  
Who warred against their countries' foes.  
In thee, the world now perceives  
A nobler, higher, living form ;  
With thee, the world now believes  
That by thy death a force was born  
Which surging onwards through the ages,  
With viviant impulse still presages  
Grander changes than the past  
Has ever shown in bygone times ;  
Changes that are sure to cast  
A blessing o'er earth's varied climes,  
Till in the heart of human kind  
A love of goodness is enshrined ;  
Till over all the earth is seen  
A spirit radiant and serene.

Great warriors oft in bygone days,  
Like Xenophon or Wallace wight,  
Who taught their countries how to fight,  
Have earned a grateful meed of praise.  
But thou hast shown the human race  
How with immaculate soul to face  
The doom decreed by tyrant's power ;  
Nor flinched thy heart in that dread hour,  
When, having drained the poisoned cup,  
With fortitude you life gave up.

Than these thou hast a greater claim,  
Hence we associate with thy name  
A pure, inspiring motive force,  
Begot of wisdom as its source,

Which flowing from thy teaching shows  
That goodness runs in varied groves,  
And sheds on all who owns it sway  
A joyous feeling day by day,  
And gives to every thoughtful man  
A sense of inward happiness,  
Which makes him feel that nature's plan  
In blessing all makes each one blest.

The seasons roll from May to May,  
And daily as the days have birth,  
The sun uprising cheers the earth  
With many a soft benignant ray.  
And thus while all things onward move  
We note the influence of his life :  
Than him there lived no better man,  
No one whose life had truer plan,  
No one who moral duty taught,  
Whose pure and useful daily thought,  
Devoted to the common good,  
Enjoyed with high and fervent words,  
With signal power and righteous aim  
Obedience to the nation's laws.

JUNE, 1906.

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## THE IMMORTALS.

Reverence for those who have in ancient times been famed for wisdom and intellectual power, has gained for them the designation of "The Immortals." I have only ventured to name six of the great men of the ancient, or most classical period of the earth's life, viz. :—Lucretius, Homer, Solomon, Socrates, Aristotle and Ocellus Lucanus. Of these the first and highest place must be accorded to Lucretius. In the preface to "The

Revolt of Islam," Shelley has referred to Lucretius as one "whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind," and has written of him as "the wise and lofty minded Lucretius." Again, in his "A Defence of Poetry," Shelley says, "Lucretius is, in the highest sense, a creator." Dr Mason Good, referring to the poem by Lucretius, "De Natura Rerum," says, "It unfolds to us the rudiments of that philosophy which under the plastic hands of Gassendi and Newton has at length obtained an eternal triumph over every other hypothesis of the Grecian schools." The Rev. J. R. Beard, referring to Lucretius, styles him "the sublimest of the Roman poets." His poem, "De Natura Rerum" (The Nature of Things), has been acclaimed as the most philosophical poem ever written. The ordinary reader will in all likelihood be aware of the greatness of Homer, Solomon, and Socrates, who are often referred to as types of the qualities which have gained for them special pre-eminence. Aristotle is however of a somewhat different order of mind. He was born at Stageira in Macedonia 384 B.C. He was appointed tutor to Alexander, son of Philip II., King of Macedon, in 343 B.C. He died in 322 B.C. He was a voluminous writer on physical subjects, and his works contain a vast collection of facts relating to natural phenomena. The physical philosophy of Aristotle was very much exalted by the schoolmen during the middle ages or from the beginning of the 9th century to the middle of the 15th. In Sargant and Whishaw's "Guide Book to Books" there is reference made to eighteen different works all relating to Aristotle. Ocellus Lucanus is referred to by Charles F. Partington, in the "British Cyclopædia of Arts and Sciences," published in 1836, as follows:—"Ocellus Lucanus is one of the most ancient philosophers, who supposed the world to have existed from eternity." There is also a notice of Ocellus Lucanus in Dr William Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology," in which it is stated in an article by George Long, M.A., that he was a Lucanian, and probably a Pythagorean. He lived, it has been stated, contemporary with Archytas or else with Pythagoras. There is, however, considerable doubt as to his actual era in time. Pythagoras flourished about 500 B.C., Archytas the mathematician about 400 B.C. The probability is that Ocellus Lucanus lived intermediately between Pythagoras and Archytas. In his works he showed that TO PAN or the KOSMOS had had no beginning, and that although there had been innumerable changes in the

economy of the universe, all things, including men and animals, had always had an existence. His work, "PERI NOMEN"—"On law, on the nature of the whole," fully explains his contention. See article by George Long, M.A., in Dr William Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology" (Published by John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, 1880).

In the high heaven of the thoughtful man  
There is beheld a vast and cultured group  
Of men, whose knowledge reaching, far expands  
And blesses earth with wisdom and with power.

But who are they thus placed in high regard,  
Upon whose starry heads the world of mind decreed,  
That myrtle crowns shall now for ever rest.

There throned on high we now behold  
He of the master-mind, Lucretius,  
Whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind,  
Old Homer—parent of all poesy,  
And Solomon—the wisest of his race,  
And Socrates—the first of virtue's sons,  
And Aristotle—the Macedonian sage,  
And he, Lucanus, of the Ocellani named,  
Who first essayed to teach the vast eternity  
Of all that hath component form or life :  
All these and many more take rank and place  
In the imperial halls where the immortals dwell.

In the long ages of the immemorial past,  
Whence we derive our life, our thoughts, our power,  
Which gives us standing in the present day,  
These great ones lived and blessed the climes they trod  
With knowledge, that to us who now exist  
A sure foundation is on which to rear  
Up structures based on scientific laws,

There is no death for such as these, for them  
 The doom of those whose persiflagent words  
 Hath cursed the world with sibilant rottenness  
 Is not. Nay, rather otherwise, for they shall live  
 In the perpetual life of all the world.  
 Progressive still, mankind shall onward march,  
 And in the coming centuries still shall note  
 With deep regard the lengthened list of earth's im-  
 mortal sons.

## AN ASPIRATION.

I have called the verses which follow "An Aspiration," for while anxious to see liberty and peace existing all over the world, I yet feel that the time when such shall be the case is as yet a long way off. Tennyson's dream of the battle flags being furled is not likely to obtain as long as ironclad ships, that cost each a million pounds of money, are being made. At the present time we are still in a civilised state of savageism. Long ago, in pre-historic time, man was in thought, speech, and action purely savage. He has outgrown that phase of his existence. Such knowledge as the centuries and the ages have brought to him have somewhat modified his nature; and where selfishness pure and simple yet reigns, he is as of old still a savage individually. Nations, however, are as savage in all their attitudes to each other even yet, as ever were individual human beings in the past ages.

SINCE from the slime of ages past,  
     The human race has outwards gone,  
     Truth has not ruled the earth alone,  
 But falsehood oft the die has cast,

The past has shown us what is real—  
     We only can the present see;



The good or ill that is to be  
The future hides within its veil.

How long shall ruthless tyrants reign,  
And peoples sit supinely still ?  
Arise O men ! with dauntless will,  
And from your labours earth shall gain.

Throw off the fetters that enthrall—  
The mind of man must now be free,  
Must now regain its liberty,  
And rise to reign as tyrants fall.

The onward march of human thought  
Is ever to the good and pure ;  
And truth shall live while men endure  
In silence what their foes have wrought.

The freedom of the human mind  
Is the inheritance of all,  
Which none has right here to forestall,  
Or dogmas teach which tend to blind.

I love to think that truth and right  
Shall triumph over lies and wrongs,  
And in the future nobler songs  
Be sung 'neath skies serene and bright.

Could I but live to see the day  
When earth beneath the smiles of peace,  
In joy and gladness shall increase,  
Content I'd pass to rest away.



## A WINTER BALLAD.

IN Winter comes the shortening days,  
When chilling winds, with howls and shrieks,  
The landscape holds in frozen bonds  
For very many dreary weeks.  
The sun seems to forget to shine,  
Or looks askant with watery rays,  
And only with occasional gleams  
Of silvery light, lights up the days.

The trees, the fields, the grass, the flowers,  
Their verdure gone, have changed their looks ;  
And silent are the woodland glades,  
And hushed the murmur of the brooks.  
A stillness reigns, where e'er I turn  
A weird-like spirit seems to brood,  
And casts a shadow over all  
As if impelled by sombre mood.

My soul is sad, the Winter's gloom  
Surrounds me now on every side,  
From morn to eve its baneful ban  
Is felt as on the dark days glide.  
The river gurgles in its bed  
As on its sullen waters flow ;  
The sky o'erhead is dark with clouds,  
A certain sign of sleet or snow.

While lowering skies thus cast a gloom  
For months to come o'er humankind,  
To Winter's varying phases man  
Becomes with fortitude resigned ;

And through the time which lies between  
The Autumn's close and Springtime's days,  
Waits with a philosophic calm  
Befitting him in all his ways.

He knows that when the Polar Bear  
Again declines, and southern skies  
Upon the vernal horizon  
Once more with milder days arise,  
That all the frowns of Winter gone,  
We hail anew a softening clime,  
And lose remembrance of the past  
In joyance of a better time.

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## THE PROMISE OF NIRVANA.

I read many years ago a book in which a malefactor, who had come to see the errors of his life, and the grief and unhappiness which his mistaken actions had caused, unavailingly repents and confesses to one who is in the tale styled "a recreant monk," but who is one who has rebelled against Monasticism and become a Buddhist. His adjurations to the penitent I have here endeavoured to express in verse under the heading of "The Promise of Nirvana."

If aught of comfort could again  
With softening spell pervade thy breast,  
My counsel might not be in vain,  
Perhaps such action would arrest  
Regrets in you that sit enthroned  
And mourn with voices awful toned.

Yet unto those whom years have borne  
With studied lapse to crime and pain,  
Who now with tears and sorrow mourn  
The deeds that never can again

Be blotted out and made unseen,  
Or be as they had never been,

There aye remains a heritage  
Of vaster anguish, wilder woe,  
Than dreams of poet ere could gauge,  
Or half its depth of sorrow know ;  
What then avails your tears or grief,  
When death alone can give relief ?

No future days can bring to you  
Oblivion of your mental pain ;  
For you no more the daisied lea  
Can bloom with verdure bright again ;  
Oppressed with grief, a prey to fears,  
Peace cannot come with coming years.

What then remains ? to bow your head  
And yield unto your hapless fate ;  
For what is done is past remead,  
You only now the summons wait,  
That soon shall come and lay you low  
Beyond the reach of every foe.

A peaceful end, a silent tomb,  
Which soon your outworn frame shall see,  
Will be your everlasting doom,  
And give surcease from misery ;  
In death's embrace you shall be blest  
With everlasting sleep and rest.

## WHEN EVENING FALLS.

WHEN evening falls, the world becomes quite dark,  
The light of day has gone, and wearied eyes,  
Released from work in all its thousand forms,  
Feel that a blessed rest to them supplies  
A grateful pleasure, such as every one,  
When the day's work done, ought to enjoy ;  
Then tired fingers cease their manual toil,  
And workers get the rest thus hardly won,  
When evening falls.

Life is a journey that all men must go—  
From birth to death with many interludes ;  
Some garner crops that oft-times others sow,  
And welcome death, when death at last intrudes,  
When evening falls.

When evening falls, Oh ! that it may be mine  
To get from all life's troubles a release ;  
To welcome with a calm and silent joy  
The messenger who bringeth rest and peace,  
When evening falls.

DECEMBER, 1908.

## TIME.

TIME was, time is, time shall for ever be,  
Eternally duration onward moves,  
There can be no cessation, ever on  
It flows. Moments succeeding moments, go  
To join the ages of the endless past ;  
The unbeginning past, that always was,  
It swallows up duration in its gulf  
Of past eternity. Age, age succeeds,  
Yet the eternity of by-past time  
Is not increased. No man can grasp in thought  
The vast eternal unbeginningness  
Of time. Impotently he stands aghast  
And strains his mind until his reeling brain,  
In the endeavour thus to comprehend  
The vast eternalness of unknown time,  
With horror seized, bids reason stop her quest  
Nor seek an answer to the mystery.  
What then is time ? What shall the answer be ?  
It is the conscious moment of our lives,  
The ever present *now* that always was, and is,  
In which we live, and move, and have our life  
In present thought. Before our askant eyes  
Anticipation looms, and bids us hope  
For coming pleasures when the craving mind  
Shall thirst for knowledge. In this the moment  
Of our sentient life only have we time ;  
It tarries not, even while we speak 'tis gone  
To join the periods of the vanished past.

## TWO TRIOLETS.

## I.

THERE is work still before us,  
A labour of love ;  
And loud is the chorus,  
There is work still before us,  
While silently o'er us  
And around and above,  
There is work still before us—  
A labour of love.

## II.

We hope for a morrow  
Uncoloured and clear,  
Undimmed by sorrow ;  
We hope for a morrow  
From which we can borrow  
Faith, true and sincere ;  
We hope for a morrow  
Uncoloured and clear.

---

## VANITAS VANITATEM.

IN childhood we argued of pleasures to come,  
When manhood had stamped his mark on our brow ;  
But, alas, how unfounded were our expectations,  
We find life is nothing but vanity now.

We muse on the past, and with sorrow regret  
We valued so little the days that are gone ;  
For we find that matureness no pleasure has brought,  
And the grave draweth near as the years swift roll on.

Improve then the present, trust not to the future,  
This day is the last you perhaps e'er may see ;  
And when you depart it will not be in sorrow,  
That time was ill-spent or uncared for by thee.

SEPTEMBER, 1908.

## RONDEAU—THE RIVER TEVIOT.

It still flows on, its silver tide  
Has onward flowed for countless years,  
And while its limpid waters glide  
Adown the vale, its aspect wears  
The peaceful look that now appears  
With ray serene to crown our pride,  
And so we feel its current bears  
Onward our hopes, though some deride—  
It still flows on.

I've roamed by many a river's side,  
Through Summer's smiles and Winter's tears,  
Yet none in all this world wide  
Evoked such hopes or soothed my fears.  
It still flows on.

AUGUST 21, 1904.

## RONDEAU—SO, I AM GLAD.

So, I am glad—my task is done.

So, glad am I, my soul elate  
Rejoices that the goal is won,  
And that we now can meet the fate  
Whate'er it be that soon or late  
Time brings to all with wind or sun.

The stars revolve with portent great  
And placid in their courses run—

So, I am glad.

The old is dead—there has begun

A newer, better, nobler state  
Of life and living. Thus each one

Will live for love, and cease to hate—

So, I am glad.

## PROSPECTION.

THERE are peaceful times to come !

We have waited through the years  
That behind us with their troubles lie ;  
Now we look ahead unto a brighter sky,  
Which with promise of serenity  
Shall for ever calm our fears.

Have you never felt an eager wish for me

To come and look again into your limpid eyes,  
And gazing in their crystal depths to see

That, which neither friend nor foe

Could ever hinder us to know—

The worship of the life that is to be.



The forest is awaking to newness of life,  
The grass is putting on a greener hue ;  
I am longing for the day  
Which shall surely end the strife,  
And when I with you alway  
Shall begin a life of happiness anew.

The river floods the plain with its waves,  
And my soul it is full of love for thee ;  
I am thrilling with the thought  
That mine shall be the bliss my spirit craves,  
When the phantoms we have fought  
Shall for aye have ceased to be.

---

## A RESPONSE TO C——.

THOUGH I may not say I love thee,  
Yet I feel love's magic flame,  
And my soul thrills with emotion  
When I breathe thy treasured name ;  
May the choicest of earth's blessings  
Bestrew thy path always,  
So thou may'st not suffer sadness  
In all thy coming days.

The days' are gone, for ever fled,  
Since first I felt thy power,  
But I've treasured sunny memories  
Of many a happy hour ;  
And as back my memory glances,  
O'er a thousand hopes and fears,  
My heart throbs with emotion  
And my eyes are filled with tears.

Deep in my soul I cherished hopes,  
 And strove to feel assured,  
 But that is past like childhood's days—  
 My fate must be endured.  
 I care no more for Summer's smiles,  
 Though softly breezes blow ;  
 The past cannot give back the dreams  
 I dreamed so long ago.

Had I again within my grasp  
 The years I've lived in vain,  
 I'd struggle with a fervour wild  
 Thy youthful heart to gain.  
 Alas ! regrets are fruitless now,  
 Such changes cannot be,  
 So nought but saddened memories  
 Remain for aye to me.

FEBRUARY, 1865.

## IMPROVISATIONS.

In "The Liberal," a progressive magazine, edited by G. W. Foote, London, 1879, there are four articles by James Thomson ("B.V."), under the title "A Strange Book." They are in the September, October, November and December issues of that magazine. The "Strange Book" is entitled "Improvisations from the Spirit," by James John Garth Wilkinson, 1857. The Improvisations are what Dr Wilkinson called, "written by impression." The *modus operandi*, as given by him, is as follows :—  
 "A theme is chosen, and written down. So soon as this is done, the first impression upon the mind which succeeds the act of writing the title is the beginning of the evolution of that theme, no matter how strange or alien the word or phrase may seem. That impression is written down, and then another and another, until the piece is concluded." Another term, as I think, might be

used, namely, *impromptus*—that is, that which is made on the spur of the moment. What I have written and laid before the reader under the title of *Improvisations* may almost be called *word-pictures*, that is, words which so describe what is written under the title as to call up in the mind's eye a picture of the subject. James Thomson ("B.V."), in his concluding article on the "*Strange Book*," has some able and critical remarks on Dr Wilkinson's *Improvisations*. It seems as if it was more of an experiment than anything else, and "B.V." remarks that Dr Wilkinson "may soon have become aware of the failure of an experiment so planned and carried out: for though twenty-two years have elapsed since this volume was written, we believe no more such *Improvisations* have been published by him." Of the numerous *Improvisations* which are given as specimens of Dr Wilkinson's, I venture to quote "*Harebells*":—

" Wills that lie in coverts dim,  
 Shaking from their bells a hymn  
 That is meant for ears of wind alone ;  
 For the belfry of the spirit-world,  
 Is most chiefly in the flowerets curled,  
 And in heavenly stillness lies its tone.

" And the fairies only dream they hear  
 Voices those with winds most thinnest ear,  
 Which they put on for that express desire.  
 But 'tis only in heavens very high  
 That the sounds of flowers and the dews' sigh  
 Are heard in waking certainty of fire."

## IMPROVISATION—SHAKESPEARE.

SHAKESPEARE was a man  
 Of very much moment,  
 Who pourtrayed the courses  
 Of life with great vigour,  
 And apart from all lawless  
 And futile constriction,

Received much approval  
From men and from women  
Of high and low standard,  
Without caring a stiver  
What people were thinking  
Of him or his doings.  
We now have the drivell  
Of numerous pundits,  
All throwing their malice  
At our greatest immortal,  
Who shall live while the world,  
Throughout the eternal  
Dim cycles of being,  
Ever rolls on its axis  
In space vast and infinite.

---

## IMPROVISATION—SHELLEY.

WAS a singer of trueness,  
Whose life was a sad one,  
Full of fervid illusions  
That society flouted,  
Repelled and resented  
With vigorous petulance,  
With horror and hatred,  
With fury and madness.  
Alas for the people  
Who tremble and torture  
The souls of the singers  
Whose songs are ecstatic.  
We have little perception  
Of the serious misfortunes

Attending the footsteps  
Of the young and the aged  
Whose lives are deflected  
From striving with gladness  
To render allegiance  
To those unacknowledged  
As earth's legislators,  
Whose wondrous creations  
Get rightful acceptance.

---

## IMPROVISATION—WORDSWORTH.

HE was a lover of nature,  
Who spoke with precision,  
In language so simple  
That all people wondered  
At the truth and the beauty  
Enwrought into his verses.  
He communed with nature,  
Whose constant endeavour  
Is towards evolvment  
Of specimens nobler  
Than those seen already  
Throughout the Arcana  
Of the sentient universe,  
Which shows us the beauty  
Existent in woodlands,  
In flowers and in grasses,  
Unfold its existence  
In wondrous variance.

## AN ELECTION TALE.

The following "Election Tale" is an almost literal account of an incident which took place about twenty years ago.

Two worthy compatriots of Home Rule fame,  
An ex-M.P. and an uncle whom I shall not name,  
A short time ago they a canvassing went,  
And fooled some poor cottars to the top of their bent.  
They returned to Langholm, but their train was away.  
And as it was Saturday they had to stay.  
On the Sunday a sort of machine they did hire,  
And drove up the Ewes and by Moss-paul like fire ;  
But when near Castleweary the poor horse broke down,  
So they called on the farmer, a man of renown.  
Their piteous tale unto him they did tell ;  
"Come into my house," he said, "I'll treat you well."  
So the farmer they followed, and soon they sat down  
To flagons of milk and scones birselled brown.  
The fare it was homely, their hunger was keen—  
Sic an M.P. and uncle, sure, never were seen ;  
For the scones, cheese, and milk disappeared very fast,  
And the farmer thought "goodness how long will this last,"  
But the longest repast comes at last to an end,  
And the gluttons, quite satisfied, turned to their friend,  
Who thus was addressed—"You're a voter I trow  
And a follower of Gladstone, who the vote gave to you,  
Ye'll be voting the leeberal ticket, we hope ;  
It's the right thing to do, for the people can't stop  
In the on-rush o' progress that heralds the day  
When landowners and nobles will be all swept away."

The farmer looked puzzled, and then scratched his head—  
“Ye’re a pair o’ queer mortals,” at last he said,  
“I never did think when I asked ye in  
That to talk on politics ye wad begin,  
I’ve aye voted Leeberal, the Tories I ban ;  
I’ll vote Leeberal again, Mr Elliot’s my man.”  
“But Mr, look here,” then the uncle did say,  
“If Elliot gets in there’s the devil to pay ;  
Now Napier’s the man that’ll put a’ things right.  
When Gladstone, our leader, comes back in his might,  
He’ll look after the way that our money is spent,  
And poor folk ’ill get farms for a very small rent.  
Its hard terms at present, of this I am sure,  
That puir cottar bodies find it ill to endure.  
Landowners sometimes are hard as a screw,  
But a gracious man is the Duke o’ Buccleuch—  
He’ll listen quite pleasant to ought ye can say,  
And wi’ a bad answer no turn ye away.  
I yince saw him mysel’ for the Building Society,  
And an answer I got without any dubiety.  
Some land for some buildings we wanted to feu,  
And would pay him the value he thought was his due.  
He agreed to the terms we proposed for the land,  
And in token thereof signed the deed wi’ his hand.”  
When the farmer this lang-winded oration had heard,  
He again scratched his head, and then stroked his beard—  
“If it a’ be true that I’ve heard ye say,  
The country, I’m dooting’s, in a very bad way ;  
But I once heard a story—I’ll no say it’s true—  
That gives what ye say quite a different hue.  
In the big toon o’ Hawick a gentleman dwell’d,  
I’ll tell ye the story as I’ve heard it tell’d,  
He owned a bit land near the side o’ the *waiter*,  
No worth tippence a year to ony puir craitur ;

But as time rolled on, and Hawick toon grew bigger,  
This bit land grew in value to a verra big figure :  
For with houses it was built all round about,  
Which well pleased its owner without any doubt.  
It increased thus in value to such an extent  
That a fortune in itsel' was the unearned increment,  
And the owner, a Radical, as I've heard folk say,  
Asked a price, aye a hummer times ower much to pay.  
Now where was the conscience of this Radical man,  
Who, crying out against others, and approving the plan  
Of campaign, yet while selling his own turned the screw,  
And to others didn't do as he wished them to do ? ”  
The uncle turned red, and the *nery* turned blue,  
Then they looked at each other, these good men and true :  
But never a word had the twain got to say  
In reply to the farmer— “ It's time we're away.”  
Was the only reply that the puir farmer got  
As they rose in their hurry to get from the spot.  
They baith shook his hand, 'twas as hard as a horn,  
In't the anc a half-crown left, the other a florin.  
“ We're no buying ye're vote,” baith o' them did say,  
“ But acknowledging the kindness we've got here the day.”  
The farmer laughed loud—“ Faith an 'twad be immense  
If ye could buy my vote wi' your fifty-four pence.  
Votes are no to be bought juist sae easy as that,  
Ye may take my word on't, and I'm no sic a flat  
As to think that ye can wi' yer gab and yer gash  
Buy up my vote wi' four and sixpence in cash.”  
This was jaw that the gentlemen couldna' weel stand,  
They had heard quite enough 'bout the value of land,  
So they lashed the wee horsey quite hard with the whup,  
And instead of “ gee-wo ” they cried “ gee-up,”  
And down Teviot water took quickly their way,  
No thinking o' canvassing mair that Lord's-day.



## NECESSITY : A DAY DREAM.

METHINKS I see a happy land  
From sin and sorrow free ;  
Methinks that an angel pointeth  
Out the way to me ;  
And I gaze with a fervid longing,  
And I struggle to be free ,  
But a mighty power controlling  
Keeps me from liberty.

As if fettered with massive chains,  
Or held in a giant's grasp,  
Inactively I lie and weep  
And dream of that land of rest ;  
And I feel my spirit sinking  
While voices say to me :  
"Struggle not, unhappy mortal,  
Death comes when you get free.

"That happy land is Eden fair,  
This life is but a dream,  
In which there's no reality,  
Though real it oft may seem.  
The angel you see standing there  
Is Hope—yet even he  
Is compelled by stern necessity  
To point the way to thee.

"The fetters that seem to bind thee  
Are this world's cares and fears ;  
And when sinks the time-worn spirit,  
The issue is groans and tears ;

But the time is fast approaching  
When release shall come to thee ;  
Struggle not, unhappy mortal,  
But abide thy destiny."

---

## TO ANGELA.

FAIREST, how can I e'er to thee  
Describe the spell you've cast o'er me ;  
Thy lips of deepest ruby dyes  
Enhance the lustre of thine eyes,  
Which sparkle like to costly gems  
Adorning monarch's diadems.  
Thy cheeks so lovely and so fair  
Are kissed by locks of curling hair,  
And over all thy queenly brow  
Supremely reigns ; to me even now  
Thou seem'st an angel pure and bright  
With radiance of celestial light.  
Thy lustrous glances shed a glow  
That makes my soul to overflow  
With gladness, such as never man  
Before has felt, or feeling can  
With tongue express in words convey,  
When all his powers are charmed away.  
'Turn not away, 'tis bless to me,  
Aye, bliss akin to ecstasy,  
To gaze upon thy lovely face  
And in its lineaments to trace  
A beauty of a deeper kind,  
Born of the virtues of thy mind.

## SHADOWINGS.

My life has sometimes seemed to me a dream,  
I've watched the clouds of heaven flit slowly by,  
And felt that things were not as oft they seem,  
But that our lives give nature whiles the lie.

Life would be dark and dull were there no hope  
That we through course of many years could claim  
Some progress had been made, and that a stop  
Were put to things that obscured our fair fame.

Yet life to us in troth is very brief,  
We live and know that days must follow days ;  
Some days to us bring joy, some days bring grief,  
Yet none brings trouble that for ever stays.

Where grew one blade of grass, to make two grow  
Is a good work, and truly is the palm  
To him awarded who good seed can sow  
And tend its growth with soul serene and calm.

Thus work in its productive form brings forward seed,  
And though some pessimistic cad may cry,  
"What is the good"? to such we give no heed,  
For new forms spring to life as old forms die.

Thus while the seasons roll their annual round  
There shall be progress, while the placid earth,  
With purposeless effusion from the ground,  
Shall ever give to newer forms their birth.

## THE LAMENT OF ARABI PASHA.

Almed Arabi Pasha, the leader of the Egyptian National Movement, with about 4000 soldiers of which he was the commander, surrounded the palace of Tewfik, the Khedive, at Cairo, and demanded increased pay, which was granted. Arabi was then appointed Under Secretary of War in January, 1882. The dual control of the French and English Governments over the finances of Egypt seeming to be in jeopardy, the British and the French Governments sent a squadron of six English and four French men-of-war to protect the interest of Europeans in Alexandria on 20th May. The notables (Egyptian Parliament) had resolved to vote funds for the army under Colonel Arabi Pasha. Then the Ministry resigned, and the Khedive who was unable to form a new Ministry, refused to make the concessions which the national party demanded, and the whole executive and military power thus fell into the hands of Arabi Pasha. The arrival of the ships of war before Alexandria provoked the spirit of the native Egyptians, and hundreds of men, women and children began to work at the formation of earthworks and batteries, the spirit of resistance spreading among all classes. Under Arabi Pasha, who had been decorated by the Sultan, the defensive works made great progress. Then Admiral Seymour intimated on 6th July that unless the works were stopped he would fire on the city. This demand not being complied with, the bombardment of Alexandria took place on the 11th July. The Sultan protested against it, and four days before it took place the French Government definitely declined to join in the bombardment. After the bombardment of Alexandria, Arabi Pasha retreated into the interior of Egypt with an army of about 30,000 men. Numerous small engagements took place from 13th July up till the 13th September, when the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought, which resulted in the total defeat of Arabi Pasha, who, with about 10,000 of his army, made an unconditional surrender. Arabi Pasha was tried in November, his defence being supported by Mr Wilfred Blunt, who strongly objected to the secret examination of witnesses. He pleaded guilty of rebellion, and sentence of death was commuted to banishment for life. He subsequently wrote a letter to Wilfrid Blunt in which he expressed his confidence in the opinion which the

English people would have towards him. The island of Ceylon was fixed on as the prison residence of Arabi Pasha and several others, to which they were deported on the 27th December, 1882.

MY native land ! My Egypt !  
I struck a blow for thee,  
And long ere this I fondly dreamed  
To see thee once more free.  
To see thy brave and noble sons  
Released from foreign thrall,  
And plenty, peace and happiness  
The lot of one and all.

Alas ! alas ! these golden dreams  
Were rudely dashed away,  
And Egypt's hopes were blasted  
At Tel-el-Kebir's fray.  
Oh ! Allah since it is thy will  
That Egypt's sons shall slave,  
Grant to thy servant Arabi  
At least a soldier's grave.

The English people thirst for gain,  
And gloat o'er Indian gold,  
And to our cries for justice  
Turn silent looks and cold.  
The wailing of the fellaheen  
Is heard all through the night ;  
Alas ! the wrongs of Egypt's sons  
No sympathy excite.

Oh Egypt ! land of glory,  
When shall I see thee free,  
Oh Egypt ! Oh my country !  
My heart throbs fast for thee.

My hopes of freedom blasted,  
My dreams of glory o'er,  
I now no more can aid thee,  
Farewell for evermore.

DECEMBER, 1882.

## REMINISCENCES.

I HAVE dreams of long past days,  
When my loving wife and I,  
In a thousand different ways,  
Saw the days glide slowly by,  
Each viewed as through a golden haze.

The years were very pleasant then,  
For we loved each other well ;  
Night and morning, but and ben,  
We lived so, that like a spell  
Our lives were odorous to all men.

When the sun's first morning rays  
Woke the song-birds in the grove ;  
When the weavers went their ways  
To the factory, where they wove  
Cloth that drew forth words of praise

Then we, light of heart and limb,  
Saw the sun with gladness rise,  
Nor wearied for the evening dim,  
Nor saw with aught but pleased eyes  
The sun receding o'er earth's rim.

We felt that many coming years  
Would crown our lives with sweet display ;  
We felt that for us cares and fears  
Were like the weeds that by the way  
Spring up—as often such appears.

Each day seemed like a holiday,  
So sweet and pleasant were our lives  
From January on to May,  
When nature in her beauty thrives,  
We basked in love's potential ray.

The household cares, the trifling things  
That make the round of daily life,  
Were each and all the source of springs  
That held us both, kept us from strife,  
And kept our lives from questionings.

But now no more with converse sweet  
The years glide on, for she and I  
Are parted never more to meet,  
And neither earth, nor air, nor sky,  
Can give such solace as is meet.

So here I live, a lonely man,  
Devoid of hope or love of life,  
And caring naught, I have no plan  
Whereby to live, nor seek I strife,  
I only live as now I can.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1894.

## PONDERINGS.

My childhood's days seem far away,  
And over a long length of years  
I oft look back to what appears  
To have been an unhappy way.

My life was dull, no rosy morn  
Before me spread a golden light,  
But darkened was each moment's flight  
Almost as soon as it was born.

A timorous child, I came to feel  
That I ought always try to be  
Content with that which I might see,  
Nor vex myself for things unreal.

The longings of my soul were crushed,  
I heard no songs of life or love ;  
A death-like sadness round me clove,  
And every spring of joy was hushed.

The week-days were all days of toil,  
The Sundays were all days of gloom,  
No brightsome rays did e'er illumine  
Or to the darkness be a foil.

Oft now I try the wandering thoughts,  
That then I had to overhaul,  
To reproduce them one and all,  
And of their influence take notes.



## LINES—A FATHER TO HIS SON AGED THREE YEARS.

My little son, what words can tell  
 How sweet to me is that laugh of thine ;  
 How much I love to see thee smile,  
 No one on earth can ever divine.  
 Singing sweet songs, you come to me  
 With your childish ways and your smiling face,  
 Softly you speak with guileless glee  
 And cling to me with an artless grace.

What matters't to me if the day be wet,  
 What matters't to me if the day be dry,  
 So thou art near to prattle and play  
 And gladden my heart with the glance of thine eye.  
 I love to watch thy wandering feet,  
 To see thee pleased and happy all day ;  
 I love to think that thy heart is pure,  
 Not troubled with care, but intent on play.

My beautiful boy—my darling son,  
 Long may thy life from trouble be free,  
 Long may the days begin and end  
 Nor sorrow nor suffering bring to thee.  
 May sadness ne'er quench thy infant smiles,  
 May life be sweet as if roses shed  
 Their leaves and their odour every day  
 On the ground wherever thy feet shall tread.

OCTOBER 18, 1884.

## THE OLD TRAMP'S PESSIMISTIC ANSWER.

I had a talk some years ago with an old man who was one of the tramps that roam the country spending their lives in incessant and continuous travelling from place to place. He had in his younger years been in good circumstances, but having given way to dissipated habits he had, as he phrased it, "come down to the road." In answer to the questions I ventured to ask, he replied with a considerable amount of ability. He seemed to be a philosophic sort of vagabond, one who felt that speech was silver and silence golden. He was willing to talk about tramps and tramp life in a general way, but as respects what might be called the facts of his life, he would not speak. I came to the conclusion after I had seen him disappear in North Bridge Street, that he had had a superior kind of an education. His language was refined, his manner was polite, and he seemed to be well informed on the current topics of the times, yet after all he was only a tramp.

WHAT has my life been ! How shall I answer ?

In the many by-gone years, now forever gone,  
Are there any incidents worthy recalling,

Worthy of remembrance ? Is there even one ?

My life, I fear, has always been a failure,

Success has not followed on the efforts I have made,  
Yet I have struggled onwards, always aiming high,

Yet levelled to the ground my hopes have oft been laid.

Only once before me there rose a golden dream,

Bright as the radiance of Summer mornings gay ;

It cheered me and blessed me with a glorious promise,

But left me sad and sullen as it faded away.

Now the evening of my days finds me bent and weary,  
 Sad at heart and only marking time, all the day  
 Waiting for the ending that must follow on the living  
 Of the days that push each other ever on their way.

I have no longings for a life of gladness,  
 I plough the sea of life like a ship on ocean's crest,  
 Troubles like to rolling billows now surround me,  
 My only craving now is soon to sink to rest.

Then while the world rushes onward in its madness,  
 When other lives are being wasted as mine has been,  
 Sleeping in the future, unconscious of life's turmoil,  
 I shall get a rest at last, eternal and serene.

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## ESPERANCE.

*(Lines written in a Lady's Album.)*

WHEN skies o'erhead are smiling fair,  
 When flowers beneath our feet are springing,  
 When sweet and clear the skylark's singing  
 Resounds throughout the clear blue air,  
 Earth seems a scene of beauty rare.

Oft then our bosoms grow elate  
 With happy thoughts of days a-coming,  
 Which, like the honey bee's soft humming,  
 Will free our minds from care and sadness,  
 And lighten up our souls with gladness.

NOVEMBER 17, 1906.

## DAYS AND HOPES.

At morn, in the pale east,  
The golden day has birth ;  
At eve, in the bright western sky,  
It slowly fades and dies.  
The glory of the morn  
Has blessed the earth,  
The beauty of the eve  
Has gladdened mortal eyes.

Oh ! blessed and holy sunrise,  
That bringeth hope to man ;  
Oh ! glorious and welcome day,  
That findeth new work begun ;  
Oh ! wondrous eve that crowneth  
All, when the day is done.

When clear on his vision streameth  
The love that for ever endures,  
The soul of man then rejoiceth  
With a sweet and a holy joy ;  
Through his veins the impulse surges  
With a peace that for ever ensures,  
With a force that no power can destroy.

Then borne in on the soul of the weary  
Is an afflatus sweet and benign ;  
Then smoothed is the soul that was chaffing  
And ceases to fret or repine ;

And bright with the hope of the morrow,  
All troubles are frightened away ;  
Then life no more tinctured with sorrow  
Shall welcome a beautiful day.

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## THE DAWN OF PEACE.

A NEWER light is breaking  
Over the land at last,  
And the nations now are waking  
Out of the sleep of the past.  
The star of freedom is rising,  
It shines in the morning sky,  
And myriads of hearts are throbbing  
With the joys of victory.

The golden age of the ancient Greeks  
Is outshone by this glorious time,  
For battle cries shall no more be heard  
But joined by a faith sublime,  
Nation to nation will ever be  
Knitted together in peace,  
And friendship and love and charity  
On earth shall never cease.

We live in an age of wonder,  
For never a dreamer of dreams  
Ever dreamed that ages of plunder  
Would give place to the gladdening beams  
Of the light that now shineth on high,  
With a radiance sweet and serene,  
Out-blotting all the wrongs of the past  
As though they never had been,

## THE SEASONS.

It is Springtime in the country,  
And the soft and balmy air,  
Sweet and pleasant to the senses,  
Redolent of all things fair,  
Gently stirs the fragrant blossoms  
Upon our apple tree,  
And brings pleasant thoughts of Summer  
To you, my love, and me.

It is Summer in the country,  
And the carolling lark on high  
Pours a flood of joyous love notes  
Throughout the clear blue sky,  
While the air upon its bosom  
Bears a thousand scented sweets,  
Cows are lowing in the meadows  
And the playful lambkin bleats.

It is Autumn in the country,  
Now the harvest claims our care,  
The fields with golden corn are ripe  
And ready everywhere ;  
The reapers wield the sickle now,  
And cut the yellow grain ;  
As wont, the gleaners follow them  
And gather spikes again.

It is Winter in the country,  
And the clouds are hanging low,  
And the days are dark and dreary,  
Passing sullenly and slow ;

And the leafless trees are groaning,  
As they're shaken with the blast ;  
While the river sadly moaning,  
As with sorrow gurgles past.

Thus the Seasons onwards roll,  
In their various garbs arrayed ;  
Summer, joyous, gay, and jubilant ;  
Winter, grave, and stern, and staid ;  
Yet we know as on they speed  
Change must ever all things sway,  
Shade and sunshine alternating,  
Even as night succeeds to day.

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## MY AIN BORDERLAND.

My ain Borderland,  
My ain Borderland,  
Oh, weel do I like  
My ain Borderland ;  
For nae other part of Scotland  
Has hills that's half as grand  
As the bonnie, bonnie hills  
Of my ain Borderland.

They are famed in Border story,  
They are full of Border life,  
And a grandeur and a glory,  
Begot of Border strife,  
Seems to hover on the summits,  
As if caused by magic wand,  
Of the bonnie, bonnie hills  
Of my ain Borderland.

## LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

WE went for a stroll, my love and I,  
The sun had set in the western sky.

A radiance sweet and clear,  
The moon from her airy throne  
With mellowed lustre shone.  
Like diamonds glittering bright  
Or stars in a cloudless sphere  
Were her rays of silvery light.

To my love I turning said,  
Let us tempt the thicket's gloom  
And breathe the sweet perfume  
Of the wild-brier's gentle rose,  
That in the evening's sheltering shade  
A languorous fragrance throws.

Sequestered from the moving crowd,  
Screened from the vulgar gaze,  
Again was told the old, old tale  
That first was told in Eden's bowers.  
The tale of love in life's gay morn  
When hopes and feelings move the soul,  
When visions bright, with lucent power,  
Expectant gleamed in coming days,  
And made the future years appear  
A vista born of love's young dream.

Does time hold aught that more than this  
Can give to mortals purer bliss ?

APRIL 5, 1911,



## THE OLD WEAVER.

The following verses represent to a considerable extent a phase of industrial life which, if it has not passed away, is fast passing away. In the days before there were carding and spinning mills and weaving shops, in Scotland especially, all the processes by which wool was made into yarn, and yarn into cloth, were carried on by the female portion of the community. From the early times women have had entrusted to them the providing of the clothing of the members of the family, and the care of the textile requirements of the household. The accommodation which our modern life, with its factories and trading institutions, gives to individuals now, had in these days no existence. The distaff (Scot. *rock*) and the muckle wheel then stood in the place now taken up by the carder and the spinning jenny; while the old country hand loom, and the old weaver, produced the linen, the blankets, and the duffel and droggit cloth which was very much used as clothing material.

THE shuttle darts from side to side  
Of the loom, as the weaver plies  
His hands and his feet that go to and fro,  
While he watches with eager eyes  
The warp, as it evenly rises and falls,  
Through whose shed the shuttle flies.

He bends his form to the weary task,  
For the poor anatomy knows  
He has starving weans and a crying wife,  
And no lack of other woes;  
So he works away with a patient skill  
From morn till the evening's close.

There once was a time when he was young,  
When he felt that the world wide

Was a place to him of love and joy,  
When she, who was his bride,  
Agreed to face the future with him,  
Whatever might them betide.

Now when sitting at work on his loom,  
He thought, as the shuttle flew  
From end to end of the moving lay,  
That he had had troubles enow,  
That life was sad and the world bad,  
And dark was the prospect in view.

He was certain that soon a time would come  
When his power of endurance would fail,  
When he would no longer be able to work,  
When old age with its woes would prevail,  
And lay him at last for ever past  
In the land of the mystic veil.

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## TIME AND YEARS.

WHEN I was young it seemed to me  
Three score and ten I'd never see,  
Now more than that has been my lot,  
I've reached the age of seventy-three.

My youthful years passed slowly by,  
The days seemed long, the nights were drear,  
The weeks, the months, drawled slowly on  
And laggard steps had every year.

But time sped on, and when I reached  
To manhood's day—age twenty-one—  
I felt that time less slowly moved  
And that in truth it quicker ran,

The years sped on, when manhood's prime  
Was reached—at forty years—I knew  
That time still faster seemed to go,  
And that man's days were very few.

The sum and substance of all this  
Is, that as we add years to years  
We think the lengthened term of life  
Shorter than it at first appears.

Young folk impatient, forward look  
To act a part, to gain a prize ;  
The aged feel they've had their share,  
And backward look with placid eyes.

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## A CALL TO BATTLE.

LET us onward, see the future  
Beckons us with open hand,  
And the ages that are ended  
Point us to a happy land ;  
Point us to a grander era  
Than yet has been on earth,  
When mercy, truth, and justice  
For ever shall have birth.

Yet the future that before us,  
Bright with golden promise lies,  
Must be wrought for—must be fought for—  
Must be longed for as a prize ;  
We have need of all our courage  
In the battle now begun,  
We need true and valiant warriors  
In the fight that must be won.

Hark, the battle cry is "Onward!"  
There must be no standing still ;  
To oppression, fierce resistance  
We must give with heart and will.  
There must be no dilly-dallying  
With the errors of the time,  
There must be no shilly-shallying,  
But work, honest and sublime.

Then the golden hopes of manhood  
Will not have been in vain,  
But a forecast high and holy  
Of the life we longed to gain,  
Which before us without shadows  
Then shall crown our grand crusade,  
And when life shall be worth living  
In the future we have made.

Oh, 'tis sweet to think that surely  
In the days that are to come  
There shall cease that aching misery  
That hath made poor people dumb ;  
Dumb with sickness and with sorrow,  
Till they died for want of bread ;  
None to mourn the hapless ending  
'Mong the living of the dead.

## JOHN GEORGE LUFF.

Mr Luff, of the Central Hotel, is one of the persons whom the people of Hawick have got to reckon with. He is a man who has impressed his personality upon the town and people of Hawick. It is more than thirty years since he came to Hawick, having then undertaken the situation of a waiter in the Tower Hotel. He was then a young man about, or not quite, thirty years of age. He could then converse very fluently in French and Italian, having acquired a knowledge and considerable facility in these two languages during quite a number of years' experience in various situations on the Continent of Europe. He is also a student and a proficient of the system of Shorthand known as Phonography, and a number of years ago published a manual elucidatory of some points in Pitman's System which he, as well as some others, considered required explanation. The Central Hotel, of which he is proprietor, was at first a Temperance Hotel. Adjoining to it was a long low wooden erection popularly known and spoken of as "The Coffin End." The shops which it contained were several feet lower than the level of the street, and the roof of the "Coffin End" was flat and thoroughly suggestive of a coffin. It was quite an eyesore to the public, and even the Town Council had laid plans for its removal. Mr Luff approached the licensing authorities and said if they would give him a hotel licence he would remove the objectional structure. This was too much in the nature of a bargain and could not be considered or agreed to. Mr Luff, however, rebuilt and enlarged the "Central," and at the same time removed the "Coffin End." When he again applied for a licence it was granted. Mr Luff has persistently carried on a crusade against Clubs, averring that they in fact are virtually, though not legally, shebeens. His energetic action has caused him to have quite a number of critics, who have criticised him more than his arguments. Mr Luff, as one may say, has grown indifferent to the sneers of deprecators, and looks forward to a time when that which is said will be treated respectfully, for the status of a man as well as his character can not be adequately known until he has left the world behind him. The Central Hotel, which has a commanding appearance, was built during the Provostship of Mr W. S. Barrie,

in the year 1894. It is one of the better class of ornamental buildings in the east end of the town. In November, 1901, Mr Luff was elected Councillor for Wilton Ward, and served three years, during which time, as he himself has said, he did more municipal work than mere talking, as he was for three years on the Police Committee and on the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act Committee. Mr Luff has during the last decade published several books and pamphlets dealing mainly with the relations of Clubs and Public Houses to the State, in all of which, with a vehemence born of a sincere conviction, he maintains that there ought to be a reform made in the laws which permit and regulate the sale of excisable liquors. His latest book, "The Income Tax Corrector," he avers, will let any merchant know daily, weekly, and monthly, how his business is going on in every department.

## I.

WHEN he had got a proper start as head of a hotel,  
Our hero his attention turned to other things as well,  
And much he then and there did say of how he'd like to  
make  
In Wilton Lodge's public park a large and lovely lake.

He talked so much about this lake that people got to think  
He'd make a good Town Councillor, although he dealt in  
drink ;

So for Wilton Ward he was put up, and when the poll was  
o'er,

T'was found that Georgius was in by twenty votes or more.

Now in this town it came to pass that there were lots of  
clubs

That did a roaring trade in drink, defrauding thus the  
pubs,

Who only ought, as George averred, to have the right to  
sell

To all and sundry drink, for which they licence paid as  
well.

So Georgius a pamphlet wrote, and made the case quite  
clear,

That only he and such as he were licensed to sell beer  
And other drinks, which working men might wish to drink,  
when they,

Their hard-won earnings spending free, were having  
holiday.

From the balcony of his hotel he then a speech did make,  
It made the clubbers in the town all in their shoes to  
shake ;

The pubs are bad—but clubs are worse, the people all did  
cry,

Suppress the clubs, they're worse than pubs, they sell drink  
on the sly.

Some scribblers to the papers wrote their wicked tales to tell,  
How Hawick a pandemonium was—a sort of little hell,  
How starving weans and ill-used wives were seen in every  
street,

And rows and riots everywhere wad make even angels  
greet.

But others to the papers wrote, and said it was a fable,  
That Hawick was quite a model town, her standing good  
and stable ;

Her sons were brave, her daughters fair, her trade and  
commerce steady,

In peace or war her Callants were on all occasions ready.

And then a wordy war began, and fierce the contest raged,  
And for some time this paper war with energy was waged ;  
The clubs and pubs pursued their way, and never cared a  
docken ;

At last the scandal settled down, and then no more was  
spoken.

## II.

He's a scrumptious sort of man is John George Luff,  
He's a bumptious sort of man is John George Luff ;

And the Central Hotel

It suits him very well,

A vigorous sort of man is John George Luff.

He is down on drinking clubs is John George Luff,

He is agent for the pubs is John George Luff ;

He has mony an artful plan,

He's a clever little man,

And he disna care for snubs dis John George Luff.

He's a Councillor for Wilton Ward is John George Luff,

Yince he talked baith fast and hard did John George Luff,

Now he's in, he isna crouse,

He's as quiet as a mouse,

And he plays the silent card dis John George Luff.

He proposed a grand Lake scheme did John George Luff,

It'll no add to the fame of John George Luff ;

Lots of ridicule it got,

It will never come to ought,

For its naething but a dream by John George Luff.

Some teetotallers are shams, says John George Luff ;

There's no harm in moderate drams, says John George Luff ;

Good Templars ought to know

That pubs are not the foe

To temperance, like the clubs, says John George Luff.

I, the temperance squads defy, says John George Luff ;

What they say is all my eye, says John George Luff,

They're penurious and few,

If they tried my Mountain Dew

They would tippie on the sly, says John George Luff.



## A REVERIE.

I sit here on a mountain's side,  
And gaze afar o'er field and fen,  
And feel a happiness unique,  
Though distant from the haunts of men.

So here I rest, and resting dream,  
As if with retrospective eyes,  
That in the past life's passions were  
Illusions—not realities.

And here secluded from the crowd,  
That tread the city's busy mart,  
I muse on former days and scenes,  
In which I played a minor part.

No chiming clocks break on my ear,  
No sounds disturb the solitude ;  
A calmness deep of nature born  
Enchains me, and I sit and brood.

I sit and brood on days long past,  
When gladness every moment filled,  
When life in many doubtful ways  
Before me stretched with joy distilled.

Again I see through memory's haze  
The Summer days, the village street,  
Where wild with wanton mirth we played,  
And danced with swift and agile feet.

The merry days of long ago,  
When hearts were young and fancies bright,  
When time had scarce begun to form  
Its pictures on our mental sight.

Remembrance of these far back times  
Induces thought in fitful ways,  
And gives a piquancy to him  
Who reminiscent onward strays.

Yet on has flowed the constant tide  
Of days and nights, of storm and calm,  
And with the passing hours has come  
To me surcease and honied balm.

Ah me ! how many moons have set,  
How many lustrous suns have shone,  
How strange has been my wayward lot,  
Compelled to face life's monotone.

I'll brood no more, the present now  
Holds out to me a loving hand,  
And proffers me a kinder fate,  
Conferred as if by magic wand.

FEBRUARY, 1911.

## THE VOYAGE OF THE GREAT EASTERN.

### A BURLESQUE.

IN the Mersey near to Liverpool,  
The Great Eastern she lay,  
But she boarded was by Hawick roughs  
And brought to Berwick bay.

“Now, what’ll we do wi’ this big ship”?  
Bold Fraser then did say,  
“Oh, we’ll sail her round by London town  
And take her to Berwick bay.”

They sailed her through the Irish Sea  
By mony an artful plan,  
For Fraser he was captain  
And Bucham was captain’s man.

They sailed her through the Dover Strait,  
And guided her day by day,  
Until at last they landed her  
In Berwick’s bonnie bay.

From Berwick bay to the Common Haugh  
They guided her fu’ weel,  
For Captain Fraser walked the deck  
And Bucham turned the wheel.

Then up the Tweed they sailed her  
By mony an artful plan,  
For Fraser he was captain  
And Bucham was captain’s man,

As they came up by Denholm town  
The fish gave mony a squeal,  
But what cared Captain Fraser,  
Bucham was at the wheel.

Then a' the folk o' Denholm town  
Cam out to see her gang by,  
But Captain Fraser walked the deck  
And Bucham cocked his eye.

As they came up by Weensland Cauld,  
And through by the Sker Pool,  
They were met by lots o' bairns, Sir,  
As they came frae the school.

The bairns they first gave a loud shout,  
Then they gave a hurray,  
When they saw the Great Eastern  
Proceeding on her way.

And so at last they landed her  
In the far-famed Pate's Plum,  
And the folk o' Hawick were made aware  
By tuck o' Tufty's drum.

---

## VERSES.

THE golden days of childhood  
Are gone for ever now,  
I roam no more the wildwood  
Nor climb the mountain's brow.

The cares of life surround me,  
Whichever way I turn,  
And fetters fast have bound me  
I vainly try to spurn,

Upon my path young love once threw  
A beam of dazzling light,  
Yet it had scarcely met my view  
Ere it was quenched in night.

And some who in my youthful days  
Eternal friendship swore,  
When I had need went other ways  
And knew me then no more.

JANUARY, 1861.

## TEVIOTDALE.

OH, Teviotdale ! loved land of song,  
What memories to thee belong.  
Back through dim centuries we gaze,  
And there behold, as in a haze,  
The stirring scenes of Border strife  
That fashioned then our Scottish life.  
The baron, in his fortalice,  
Felt that his life was not amiss  
As long as he could lift the cows  
That did on neighbouring pastures browse,  
That while the foray and the fray  
His wants supplied from day to day,  
His henchmen and his followers all  
Would always gather at his call,  
With him to battle forth would go,  
With him would meet the English foe,  
With him would harry hearth and stall,  
As victors win or vanquished fall.

## WINTER AND FAMINE.

SAD, sad are the times and the seasons,  
There is hunger abroad in the land,  
And the days are all driving before them  
The feeble who cannot withstand  
The lures and the many temptations  
That are spread in the face of the sky,  
For the workers have little resistance  
And no sign of a helper is nigh.

We look round, and the dark gloomy prospect  
Betokens a sorrowful day ;  
A time full of storms and disaster  
That shall drain all our courage away ;  
For the wind it is driving with fury  
The clouds that o'ershadow the land,  
And the rain with its pitiless beating  
Is deaf to our pressing demand.

The people are patient, and waiting  
For the dawn of a happier day  
That shall come with the sunlight of morning  
And take all their troubles away ;  
When the earth shall beneath a bright heaven  
In glory and cheerfulness roll,  
When the sufferings of nations are ended  
And peace be our ultimate goal.

# SONNETS.





# SONNETS.



## THE SONNET.

David M. Main has in his book, "Three Hundred English Sonnets," prefixed before the preface a paragraph, which I here reproduce, explanatory of the origin of the Sonnet :—"Upon a day Apollo met the Muses and the Graces in sweet sport mixed with earnest. Memory, the grave and noble mother of the Muses, was present likewise. Each of the fourteen spoke a line of verse. Apollo began ; then each of the nine Muses sang her part ; then the three Graces warbled each in turn ; and finally a low, sweet strain from Memory made a harmonious close. This was the first Sonnet ; and, mindful of its origin, all true poets take care to bid Apollo strike the keynote for them when they compose one, and to let memory compress the pith and marrow of the Sonnet into its last line."—*A Talk about Sonnets.* Of course this is what may be called the mythological origin of the Sonnet, and contains a good deal of fancy as well as fiction in it. It gives us, however, a very pretty and charming picture—a glimpse one might almost say of the pure and pleasing life which was led by the Grecian gods and goddesses. It is, however, on record that the Sonnet was invented by Guido d' Arezzo about the year 1024. Possibly the truth is otherwise. This Guido d' Arezzo is said to have adjusted the rhymes by rules. It is difficult, however, to discover which mode of rhyming is the one to which most heed should be given. It is not compulsory that there should be rhymes. A Sonnet may even be blank verse. Rhythm is more essential to poetry than rhyme. Shakespeare's Sonnets rhyme alternate lines, that is the first and the third, the second and the fourth, and so on. Wordsworth's Sonnets rhyme usually the first and the fourth, and the second and the third. Occasionally

the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines rhyme, and then the second, third, sixth, and seventh lines rhyme. The last six lines of the Sonnet rhyme variously. The Sonnet contains fourteen lines, neither more nor less. I have thought it better to place the following Sonnets at the end of this book, without intermixing them with the other pieces.

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## I.

## THE BORDERLAND.

IF I might here once more essay to sing  
The praises of our much loved Borderland,  
I would with much virility off-hand  
Express my thoughts before that they take wing,  
And leave me listless, powerless, to compel  
The muse to spread her airy pinions here.  
The Borderland of all lands is most dear  
To those who in its precincts chance to dwell :  
Its hills and vales are redolent with song  
And memories of by-past, warlike days,  
When Border chieftains oft in wanton frays  
Reived homesteads with impuneness, and with strong  
And madden'g feats of turbulent display  
Drove kindly thoughts and better moods away.

## II.

## TO HAWICK.

NEAR to the stream that with pellucid wave,  
From Teviot stone flows to the Tweed's fair breast,  
Thou hast thy stance, and there with beaming crest  
Dost thou the vale o'erlook that nature gave  
As fitting prospect for thy waking eyes.  
There in the long past centuries was kept  
A zealous guard of men who never slept  
When duty called them to prevent surprise,  
And when from tower to tower the bale-fires blazed,  
And doughty warriors rushed to face the foe,  
'Twas then that in their need to strike a blow  
Thy people, oft in frenzy sore amazed,  
Their homes surrendered rather unto flame  
Than conquered be to their eternal shame.

OCTOBER, 1904.

## III.

## PROGRESS.

WE must progress ! yes, forward we must go ;  
Our watchword must be progress till the day,  
When all our wavering o'er, we shall essay  
With robust health and strength again to show  
A steadfast front with which to meet the foe.  
There must no weak'ning tremors scare our mind,  
To duty's call we must no more be blind,  
But urge our cause with all the force we know.  
Behind us lie the fears that presaged doom,  
Before us lies the pathway bright and clear,  
The morn is breaking—success now is near,  
And hope the cause illumines where erst was gloom ;  
Our cause, upheld by justice, faith and zeal,  
Shall ever tend unto the people's weal.

FEBRUARY 10, 1907.

## JAMES DAVIDSON.

I have felt impelled to place on record before the two following Sonnets a few lines as a tribute to and in recognition of the many kindly traits in the life and character of the late James Davidson. I have done this in the Sonnets, but Mr Davidson's personality was of so kindly and amiable a nature as to make it almost a duty to further recognise its uniqueness. I was acquainted with him for a long number of years, and I was very intimate with him especially during the last ten years of his life. We frequently had long walks together on the hillsides here. Our talks always were a very pleasant interchange of opinions, and I scarcely ever had as much pleasure in agreeing with others, than I had in differing with, or from him. We differed as much as we agreed, but it was pleasant to differ from so amiable a man as James Davidson. I here quote as a still further exemplification of what I have above written, the following lines by my friend, Mr John R. Laurie, who was his brother-in-law, he having married Mr Laurie's sister.

## IN MEMORIAM : JAMES DAVIDSON.

- “ A man of sterling virtue, blameless life,  
A never-failing friend in want or woe ;  
Upright and honest in this world of strife,  
To help the fallen he was never slow.
- “ Unselfish, kindly hearted, gentle, just,  
He toiled to raise the poor with right good will.  
His work is done, his body's in the dust,  
His sympathetic voice for ever still.
- “ His sunset leaves a glittering glow behind  
That gilds the virtuous path he always trod.  
This loving tribute, humble in its kind,  
We lay upon the green and silent sod.”

In an obituary notice of him which was in the "Hawick Advertiser" of date 24th March, 1899, it is stated that he took a practical interest in the work of the Hawick Home Mission. In his early and middle life he was a woolsorter to trade, but for a number of years he had latterly been carrying on business as a coal merchant. He died on the 17th of March, 1899, aged 67, and was buried on the following Sunday in the Wellogate Cemetery.

#### IV.

A MAN of simple faith and kindly deeds,  
He lived a life of peace and quietness ;  
Of frugal tastes, not given to excess,  
But moderate in all things, his daily needs  
Were easily supplied ; to him there came  
No fierce erratic longings for a place  
Of higher note. A lover of his race,  
He daily strove with modest work to frame  
In words and deeds a way by which the poor,  
The ignorant, and sinning ones around,  
Who, needing rules by which they might be bound  
To live more rightly than they'd done before,  
Might be delivered from the certain ways  
That lead to ruin and to wrong always.

## V.

HE is now dead—the Lethean slumber came  
And closed his eyes, on his lips silence fell ;  
His form inert lay calm and motionless,  
No more to move instinct with life and power.  
We loved him for his gentle, kindly ways,  
That always made his utterance dignified ;  
He had no rude, unfeeling word to say  
Unto his fellow men, even though the poles  
Were not more distant than their adverse thoughts.  
In all he thought, or said, or did, he tried  
To live, conform unto the ideal life  
That high before him always led him on ;  
And thus through life's allotted span he lived,  
And died as he had lived, a gentle man.

MARCH, 1899.

## VI.

## MY CONTENT.

I'VE lived my life, nor would I wish that I  
Were bound again to travel o'er the ground  
My feet have trod through all life's many years,  
For joys and sadness oft in circling round  
Have me encompassed, till I've sometimes thought  
That I would never reach a restful time  
When calm, retired, I should view with joy  
The peaceful rustic scenes of Teviotdale.  
I now at last have reached the span of life  
To man allotted in the psalmist's day ;  
I now look back o'er all the foregone years  
In which my sentient thought has always moved,  
Yet cannot see where I could otherwise  
Have acted in the race that I have run.

OCTOBER, 1904.



## VII.

## DAYBREAK.

THE dawn is breaking in the purpling east,  
The fleecy clouds, that in the sombre sky  
Of night looked black and threatening, now  
New tints assume ; the god of day draws nigh,  
And with his vitalising beams, the scene  
Another aspect wears ; no more the gloom  
Of night inspires with fear the browsing herd,  
Nor wakes forebodings of impending doom.  
The hovering haze, that o'er the verdant vales  
Was born of night, lifts slowly as the sun  
Incessant sheds his warm and cheering rays,  
And gladdens all. And now the day begun,  
The earth immune upon its course once more  
Rejoicing goes as it had gone before.

## VIII.

## THE LOVE OF LIFE.

THE love of life is that which countless men  
Hold dearer than all else that earth may hold ;  
For women, wine, and even wealth untold  
Our cravings leave unsatisfied. But when  
We wounded fall in battle, or disease  
With sickening stroke confines us in our bed,  
How anxiously we wish again to tread  
This fair green earth, and feel the passing breeze  
Sweep through our vales, and bring to us the glad  
And welcome feeling that with rapture glows  
Instinctive in the human breast. The throes  
Erstwhile of trouble then no more can make us sad,  
The love of life sublimed each other thought  
That in the realm of fancy can be brought.

## IX.

## TO SUMMER.

AGAIN thou com'st with soft and genial skies,  
    Bedecked with foliage of the brightest green,  
And garlanded with flowers that charm our eyes,  
    And add new beauties to the changing scene.  
The cuckoo's note is heard, sweet, soft and clear,  
    And swallows twitter in the cottage eaves,  
The honey-bee's low murmur greets our ear,  
    And song-birds carol 'mid the forest's leaves.  
The world's alive with health and strength and joy,  
    And nature smiles with innocence and glee,  
While every art she knows she does employ  
    To clothe with beauty hill and vale and tree.  
To us who live can there be fairer scene  
Than this, which is of all the most terrene.

## X.

## CALEMON TO ALZEVRA.

I ONCE essayed to write in praise of thee,  
But from my trembling fingers fell the pen,  
I feel even now as felt I even then  
That thou art worthy of all praise. To me  
Who loved to watch thy graceful moving form,  
Who felt that only thoughts mild and serene  
Could in thy kindly breast have ever been,  
There came no premonitions of that storm  
Which wrecked thy life and mine with crushing blight.  
The hope of happier days can never more  
With boundless joy impel my soul to soar  
Into the regions of romance and pure delight,  
So henceforth now, while years to years succeed,  
We each alike must bear remorse's meed.

## XI.

## JANUARY DAYS.

THE silent hills are all enwrap in mist,  
The valleys too are shadowed o'er with gloom,  
Winter with sullen steps ordains the doom  
Of plants and flowers. No efforts can resist  
The steady force of nature's potent sway,  
No birds with cheerful songs the silence break,  
While giant trees their branches storm-tossed shake,  
In lower skies the sun pursues his way.  
Dull are the days, yet duller far my thought,  
The season brings to me sad memories—  
The death of hope and all hope's verities,  
The calmness of despair, which sets at nought  
The knowledge that another Spring shall come  
And take me nearer to my destined home.

## XII.

## THE UNIVERSE.

THE Universe, the one and only thing  
That is, or was, or that can ever be,  
Shall be the theme here of my poesy.  
To it I now this humble off'ring bring  
With reverential thought that fits my muse,  
For vast, infinite and unknown, it lies,  
With all its wonders and its potencies,  
Evolvent on all sides with power diffuse.  
The past, the present, and the future, all  
Are centred in the boundless realm  
That from eternity had immemorial force :  
And ever on, in its Promethean course,  
As if obeying some gigantic helm,  
It onward rushes with intent to pall.

## XIII.

## ON BROADLAW.

THE sun shines brightly over hill and vale,  
A soft wind blows—this is a perfect day,  
The earth seems full of joy, the fields are gay  
With myriad flowers that odorous scents exhale.  
Far as the eye can see, the rounded hills  
Like giant eggs behind each other lie,  
And flooded by the sun's bright golden rays  
Glow with a radiance borrowed from the sky.  
A silence mystical here seems to brood,  
No sound breaks on the sultry Summer air,  
Encircled by a scene surpassing fair,  
The summit of this mountain solitude  
Is redditive of an unsought surprise,  
While all its grandeur round about me lies.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1908.

## SWINBURNE.

Thirty years ago Swinburne was famous. In "The Obliviad : A Satire" (London, B. Quaritch, 1879), there are fifty-four lines of verse referring to him, to which there are added quite a number of notes to illustrate, and illustrative of, the points or facts treated of in the verses. Swinburne's early works met with little approval from the critics, nor, for that matter, from the general public. The "Athenæum" was especially severe on him, and, as was said at the time, "no wonder." He published "Tragedies with Poems and Ballads," also "Laus Veneris." This later book got so very much censured by the public, owing to the reviews, that Edward Moxon, the publisher, cancelled the edition. When he (Swinburne) published "Atlanta in Calydon," a chorus of applause greeted it. "The language was so fine," and the "Athenæum" changed its tone and lavished encomiums on its former *bête noire*. In 1890 a complete edition of his works was published in seventeen volumes by Chatto at £6 16s. the set. During the last thirty years, Swinburne's various works have been of such phenomenal merit as to entitle him to a place of as high rank as any poet of the nineteenth century, and to-day it must be acknowledged that no writer has left a more deep imprint on English literature than Swinburne.



## XIV.

No greater name is writ on history's page  
Than his, whose fiery spirit scorned control,  
He recked not of the strife, his ardent soul  
Broadcast oft flung to all the warrior's gage  
The Philippics, which voiced the 'Titan's rage.  
He dared the motley crew to strike the blow,  
In mood heroic-brave he fought the foe,  
And in the turmoil proved himself a sage,  
He tore the glozing mask from prudery's face  
With vigour and with militantic power, '   
And showed how outworn creeds were earth's disgrace,  
And cursed mankind with every passing hour.  
His life's work done he now has passed away,  
His work remains to glad the future day.

APRIL, 1909.

## XV.

## BOOKS.

BOOKS are to me a source of gladsome joy ;  
    Their magic charms day after day unfold  
    New founts of life enriched with grains of gold,  
Whose careful study all my powers employ.  
Without the converse of my faithful tomes,  
    Life were to me a desert dark and dull,  
    With them to me all days and hours are full  
Of golden thoughts where'er my fancy roams.  
Books are the blessed friends that always bind  
    The student to his task ; with kindly grace  
    They lead his varying thoughts, till in his face  
There glows refulgent high-born force of mind.  
    And thus transformed the student by his looks,  
    Shows he has found a solace in his books.

## XVI.

## WEARINESS.

WHY art thou silent when I long so much  
To know that all is well with thee and thine,  
That o'er thee still with golden rays benign,  
There's wealth of happiness within thy touch ?  
The days and nights of anxious thought and care  
Go slowly by, or seem with silent tread  
To float into a gloomy past, whose dead  
And weird-like shadows stand out grim and bare.  
Is there no surcease to this frigid state  
That chills the blood and makes my life to seem  
A phantom from the past, a noxious dream  
Begot of weariness, which soon or late  
Must end, as often many a day must end,  
In longing for a letter from a friend ?

MARCH 6, 1899. •

## XVII.

## THE GLOAMING.

THERE is not in the four-and-twenty hours,  
Which constitute the daily round of time,  
A sweeter hour than that, which, when the sun  
Retiring to his couch with act sublime,  
Leaves the soft evening shades to fall around  
The sloping hills and all the pleasant dales ;  
Then o'er the soul, like to a mystic spell,  
On every side a soothing sense prevails,  
The calm and blissful feeling that is felt  
Exalts the mind with pure and perfect joy,  
And gives the soul of man an ardent wish  
That he could all his future hours employ  
In ways and means that would all tend to make  
Man's life a blessing for the blessing's sake.

## XVIII.

## THE EFFECT OF CALUMNY.

WHAT is the good of all this rushing on,  
This ever-moving panoramic scene?  
'Twere better far that we had never been,  
Than that with vapid feelings we bemoan  
Our daily life with all its listless state.  
What live we for, have we not felt the pain  
That crushes one and all, and oft again  
Comes unto all who sorrow, soon or late?  
The dull dank clouds that sail across the sky,  
Their ever-changing forms, no message bear  
Of better times for us! We have no care  
To thus live on and 'neath aspersions lie,  
Than have our lives so much enwrapt in gloom,  
'Twere better far the silence of the tomb.

## THE GENESIS OF LAW.

The pre-Socratic philosophers made many attempts to find the origin of natural appearances. Of these, Thales of Miletus, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus were the more early enquirers. In the earlier systems of philosophy there was a marked tendency to give a first place to some one entity. Thus Thales considered water to be the primal element, from which all else was either derived, or was an emanation. Anaximenes, who is said to have been a disciple of Thales, taught that air was the primal element, a self-existent deity, and the cause of all things. Heraclitus, about 516 B.C., taught that the world was evolved from fire, which he deemed to be an omnipotent god. Empedocles, who flourished 440 B.C., was an early setter forth of the idea that there were four primal elements, viz., earth, water, air, and fire, which were acted on by two forces, the one attractive, the other repulsive. The four element theory obtained general recognition in Europe for twenty-three centuries, it being little more than one hundred years ago when it was proved by chemical analysis that earth, water, and air were compound bodies, while fire was proved to be the result of intense chemical combination. (See Essay "On the History of the Physical Sciences," by G. Rodwell, F.R.A.S. and F.C.S.)

## XIX.

WHAT can we say on this theme so august  
That all our thoughts and all our feelings sway?  
The savants that have in the bygone past  
Like us, who feel our quest is justified,  
Essayed to grapple with the cause of life  
And find a force creative, whereby man  
Became evolved from inorganic mould,  
Have passed away. The many master minds—  
Thales, of natural philosophers  
The first, Anaximenes, next of those  
With Heraclitus joined, who studied much  
The elements, and how their action formed  
From water, air, and fire, the radiant earth,  
Taught mankind first the Genesis of Law.

JANUARY 18, 1909.

## XX.

## SPRING.

ONCE more the vernal season, full of hope,  
Returns to bless with buds and leaves and flowers  
The earth. Responsive Nature smiles, and showers  
Now fall and bless us as each tiny drop  
Succeeds its fellows that have gone before.  
A greener hue is on each blade of grass,  
And Nature, seeming anxious to surpass  
Her former acts, now hastens to restore  
To every hill and vale, and hedge and tree,  
The leafy clothing that erstwhile they had,  
With added grace and beauty, making glad  
The labouring swains, who, full of joy and glee,  
Hail with sweet songs of love and innocence  
The gifts which Nature kindly can dispense.



## XXI.

## A PROPHECY.

REGENERATION over all the earth  
Shall come and shall uplift all lands with joy  
Unto that state of brightest excellence,  
Which is from fabled gods a perfect gift.  
The power of song, which, in the sunny isles  
Of ancient Greece, excelled with music's aid  
To charm mankind, again shall bless the earth.  
Again their round the peaceful years shall wing,  
And truth and beauty, walking hand in hand,  
Shall each morn welcome with their genial smiles  
The glories of the new-born Summer-time.  
The golden clouds, which speck the azure sky,  
Shall float like Seraphs smiling down on earth,  
Kind, with intent to bless the dwellers there.

## TO AN OLD FRIEND.

The old friend whom I had in my mind's eye, so to speak, when I wrote the following Sonnet, was James Jamieson. In a short biography of him which I wrote for the "Hawick Advertiser" in the Spring of the year, 1889, I referred to his intention to publish his poems. I re-published the short biography of him in a small volume entitled "Border Biography." Some years after (in 1895, I think) I got a prospectus from him stating that he had arrangements in hand in order to the issuing of a volume of his poems. He stated that he had got above, or about, fifty names of subscribers, and amongst them was Professor Blackie. I heard no more about this matter, and the volume never was forthcoming. The Sonnet, which is here given, appeared in the "Hawick Advertiser," sometime in 1905, I think. I sent a copy to Jamieson, to the care of Messrs Mould & Todd, with whom, when I had last communication with him, he was employed as a lithographer, but got my letter returned with an intimation that he was dead.

## XXII.

'Tis years and years since first I clasped thy hand,  
'Tis many years since last I saw thy face,  
I long with eager longing now to place  
Before thee, this, so thou mayst understand  
That I am still to thee the faithful friend  
Whose thoughts keep turning oft to thee,  
Who in the days of youth swore constancy  
That no dark future should have power to end.  
Those early days were full of ardent joy  
To you and I who held each other dear,  
Who forward looked, nor felt a single fear  
That fate, nor fortune, could our lives destroy.  
These days and years of youthful Springtime past  
Will solace me as long as life shall last.

## XXIII.

## REST.

MEN work with zealous hand and dream of rest,  
And as the years glide on, the changing hues  
Of Summers and of Winters bring fresh views  
Of life and life's duties to each breast ;  
Yet aye before us looms with glowing crest  
The haven towards which with anxious toil  
We forward look, when care shall not embroil  
Our lives. As in the gorgeous purpling west  
The god of day goes to his glorious home  
'Mid many coloured fleecy clouds at eve,  
And lingers lovingly as he doth leave  
The splendours of the sky and heaven's blue dome :  
So, too, we leave this life, our labours past,  
And sink into eternal rest at last.

## XXIV.

## THOMAS CARLYLE.

WITH reverence speak of him ; if he had faults,  
    Regard them not ; his strong and active mind  
    Spurned common ways, and never was inclined  
To value paltry deeds.   That which exalts  
    A man—a love of truth, hatred of shams—  
These were the features of his every thought,  
And unto him with nervous feelings brought  
    That wondrous force which, amid storms and calms  
That oftentimes shook his soul, was always there.  
    Potent and vigorous, and instinct with truth,  
    He never swerved ; even though akin to ruth,  
His soul felt tenderness that was not rare  
    In him.   His loving nature yearned to bless  
    The myriad fools that crowd this wilderness.

## FLAVIUS STILICHO—THE LAST GREAT ROMAN.

Flavius Stilicho, born 358, was the son of a German Cavalry officer. He was a soldier almost from his boyhood, having entered the Roman Cavalry shortly after the battle of Adrianople, in the year 378. His stature was over six feet, and his strength was also extraordinary. His skill with the bow, the broadsword, and the javelin, caused him to be noticed by his superior officers, and gained him rapid promotion. When in his 26th year, he was chosen by the Emperor Theodosius to conduct a mission to the Court of Persia, which he carried out with success. On his return he was rewarded with the hand of Serena, the Emperor's niece. His rise from office to office after this was rapid, and culminated in the year 385 in him being appointed Master-General of the Cavalry and Infantry. When Theodosius died, with his last breath he committed to Stilicho the care of his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius. He defeated Alaric, King of the Goths, at Polentia, when a great battle took place on Easter Sunday, the 29th day of March, 403. He also completely routed Radagaisus, the Vandal, who had, with 200,000 fighting men, invested Florence. Stilicho starved Radagaisus, who gave battle and lost, and at last surrendered. Having made a bargain with Alaric, he was denounced as a traitor to Honorius, who assented to the proposal of Olympius (Stilicho's bitter enemy) that Stilicho be put to death. He was dragged from the altar where he claimed sanctuary, and butchered by order of Olympius. In a work entitled "History of the Later Roman Empire," by J. H. Bury, published in London in 1889, Mr Bury has seemingly and without sufficient reason traduced the character of Stilicho. In an able article by Sir Herbert Maxwell, Bart., M.P., in the "Nineteenth Century," for September, 1892, it is shown how very much Mr Bury has misunderstood the character and conduct of Stilicho. (See article "Stilicho," in "Chambers' Biographical Dictionary," also article "Stilicho," in Dr William Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology," by William Plate, LL.D.)

## XXV.

IN Rome's declining years, when waning power,  
To stem the frequent inroads that the outside foes  
Made on the Empire State, had urgent need,  
At Nature's fiat, Stilicho uprose.  
The last great Roman, he, in peace and war  
Acclaimed by crowds of Rome's own citizens,  
By Claudian singled from the city's sons  
As one, whose way no one had power to bar.  
Of stature and of strength superior,  
Among the people giant-like he moved,  
Their homage his, by all he was beloved,  
He of the people was to none inferior.  
He gave his strength to Rome with ardent zeal,  
And died a martyr for his country's weal.

SEPTEMBER, 1910.

## JEHAN'S GRIEF.

The following Sonnet, "Jehan's Grief," is an attempt to condense within the limits of fourteen lines, the pith of the words used by Shah Jehan when he looked on the inanimate form of his dead wife. Arjumand Banu, Mumtaz-i-Mahal, or the "Chosen of the Palace," was the daughter of Asaf Khan, and niece of the famous Nur-Jehan, the wife of Jehangir. She was married to Shah Jehan in the year 1615, twelve years before her husband succeeded to the throne. She was only about two years a queen, when she died of childbed at Burhampore, the capital of the Deccan Province. This was in 1629. Crushed with grief Shah Jehan determined that his lost love should have such a memorial as neither woman nor man ever had in the history of the world before. So he caused the magnificent tomb, known as the "Taj Mahal," Agra, to be built. The native architect was called Ustad-Isa, but we are told that it was also the work of a French architect named Austin of Bordeaux. It took seventeen years to build and finish. Twenty thousand men were employed incessantly during that time. Besides the materials to which half Asia contributed her marbles, it is stated that it took the sum of £600,000 to pay the wages of the masons alone. After it was finished, the body of Arjumand was placed in the receptacle apportioned for it (it having been preserved all that time in a small tomb) under the centre of the dome in the place of honour. When Shah Jehan himself died years afterwards his body was laid beside that of his beloved wife. The "Taj Mahal" is the most superb mausoleum in the world. The Mogul Empire reached its zenith of greatness in the reign of Shah Jehan (See "The Wonders of the World," published by Hutchinson & Co., London, pages 36 to 42, for fuller description of the "Taj Mahal.") I may add in explanation of the reference to "Ormuzd's Angel Choir," that the Mohammedanism of Shah Jehan was tinged with Parsee Guebreism, of which religion Ormuzd is the chief deity. I may also observe that a common statement that is often made, viz., that Mohammedans teach "that women have no souls, or, if they have, that



they will perish like those of brute beasts," is, according to Sale, a falsehood and "a vulgar imputation." In his "Preliminary Discourse" to the Koran, he says, "There are several passages in the Koran which affirm that women in the next life will not only be punished for their evil actions, but will also receive the rewards of their good deeds, as well as the men." (See Sale's Koran, page 80, Warne's Chandos Classics.)

## XXVI.

My rose is dead, she whom I loved is dead,  
She whom I loved as loved I none before ;  
The mighty gods, who high in splendour sit,  
Have stolen my rose, and shut up Eslam's door.  
Between us now there is a built up wall,  
Her form is here, where is her spirit gone ?  
Her throne is void, with Ormuzd's angel choir  
In bliss she basks beside his radiant throne.  
My beauteous one, no more her limpid eyes  
Can with seraphic glances thrill my soul,  
I cry aloud and earthly pomp despise,  
And now, while years succeeding years shall roll,  
My days with saddened memories are filled,  
I here subsist, but her sweet voice is stilled.

## XXVII.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

OH, World of Books ! there are too many men

Who pass you by, and never list the songs  
You sing with many a sweet and quiet note.

No love have they for what to you belongs,  
Nor to the welcome eulogies you speak

About the storied past, whose halcyon days  
With golden glamour gleaming shone and threw  
A brilliant lustre on this earth always.

Athirst for wisdom, many search thy tomes,

'Thus eager souls, with noble zeal engrained,  
Get sure reward, by knowledge always blest,

While adding to earth's stores that which is gained.  
Blest is the man who now and always looks  
For help and solace from the World of Books.

AUGUST 10, 1908.

## XXVIII.

## SEPTEMBER.

SEPTEMBER —sweetest month of all the year,  
A little song I sing in praise of thee,  
Thy Autumn days seem full of melody ;  
For though the August hath made thee sere  
With russet garb, the moorlands now appear  
To dream of sad and uneventful hours  
When crisp October flaunts his sombre powers,  
Recursive of the sullen frowns that steer  
Us on to Winter's dull and chilling days.  
The beauty of thy variegated woods,  
Which Nature loves to paint in glowing moods,  
Oft fills our minds with wonder and amaze ;  
The lustrous changes in thy evening skies  
To all alike are objects of surprise.

## XXIX.

## TO SCOTLAND.

SCOTLAND—my country—my heart beats for thee,  
A land thou art of mountains and of lakes,  
Of forests and of moorlands, such as takes  
The poet's fancy roaming wild and free.

Had I an artist's power I would employ  
My talent in thy service, and create  
On canvas tributes men should venerate  
As things of beauty, always things of joy ;  
Such power I have not, nay, 'twas never mine,  
While oft the thought has fiercely moved my soul  
With earnest wish, henceforth I must control  
Myself within due bounds, I must resign  
My dreams of having thee by art pourtrayed,  
And love thee as thou art by Nature made.

# List of Books and Pamphlets

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By J. C. GOODFELLOW.

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